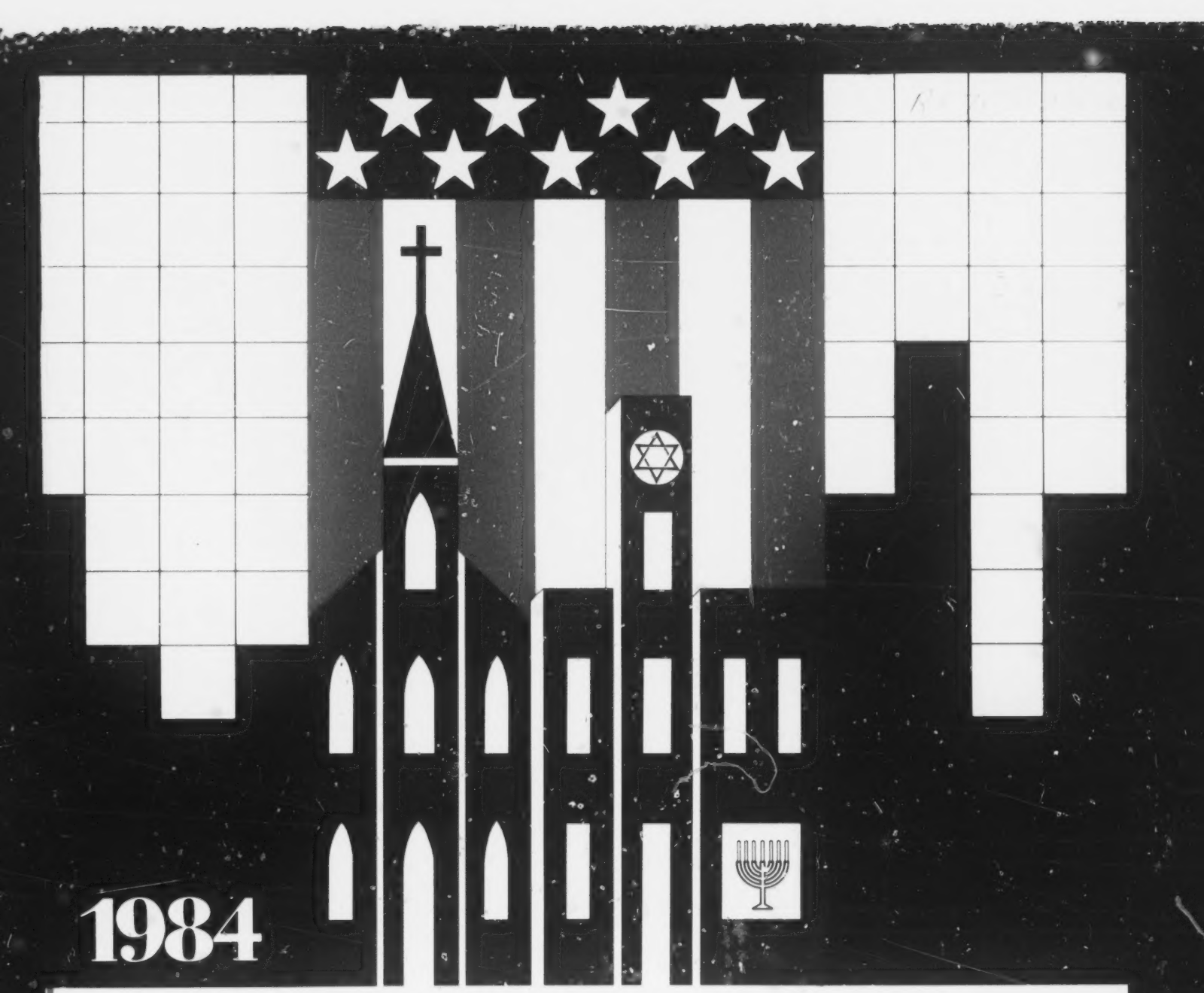

Religion in America

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THE
PRINCETON
RELIGION
RESEARCH
CENTER, INC.

The Princeton Religion Research Center is an interfaith, non-denominational research organization with headquarters in Princeton, New Jersey. The PRRC, founded in 1977, specializes in creative, actionable research, utilizing the worldwide attitudinal and behavioral facilities of Gallup International.

The purpose of the PRRC is to gain a better understanding of the nature and depth of religious commitment in the U.S. and abroad and to explore the factors behind spiritual growth or decline.

It is hoped that this information will contribute to greater understanding and improved relations among the many religions in our pluralistic society.

The PRRC exists solely to provide as accurate information as possible on the changing religious scene and does not espouse a particular religion, movement, or cause.

EMERGING TRENDS, published by the Princeton Religion Research Center, is a new monthly newsletter created to assist religious leaders and others in their efforts to be alert to emerging trends and to try to answer, with new insight, the key questions: where is the Church today and where is it going?

RELIGION IN AMERICA

1984

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I.

COMMENTARY ON THE STATE OF RELIGION IN THE U.S. TODAY

By George Gallup, Jr.

COMMENTARY

(By George Gallup Jr.)

America in 1984 appears to be confronted with a giant paradox: Religion is growing in importance among Americans but morality is losing ground.

On the one hand, levels of religious involvement remain high: Nine in 10 state a religious preference, seven in 10 are church members and six in 10 attend religious services in a given month. A majority, furthermore, say they are more interested in religious and spiritual matters today than they were five years ago.

On the other hand, widespread cheating is found in all levels of society and two-thirds of Americans hold the view that the level of ethics in the U.S. has declined during the last decade.

Michael J. McManus in his column, *Ethics & Religion*, notes the low level of ethics in this nation and questions the impact of religion on our lives: "If religion does not produce a more ethical, loving society, something is fundamentally wrong with the way that religion is being practiced."

Some light is shed on the paradox of religion gaining ground but morality slipping by the results of a recent Wall Street Journal/Gallup survey. The survey shows very little difference in the behavior of the churched and unchurched on a wide range of items including lying, cheating and pilferage.

The churched are defined as those who both belong to a church and have attended a regular service in the last six months, while the unchurched are defined as those who are either not members of a church or have not attended church in the last six months, apart from weddings, funerals, or special holidays such as Christmas, Easter, or Yom Kippur.

The findings, which show little difference in the ethical behavior and views of the churched and unchurched, underscore the need for religious leaders to channel this new religious interest in America not simply into to religious involvement but into deep spiritual commitment, for Gallup surveys show dramatic differences in attitudes and behavior between the "highly spiritually committed" and those with less spiritual commitment.

If the churches of America are able to move the populace to deeper levels of spiritual commitment in the years ahead, the effect upon society could be profoundly salutary.

First, to set the context for religious trends in American society, here is a review of certain negative and positive trends in the U.S. today.

The negative trends in society today could lead one to believe that the American dream is turning into a nightmare:

* Crime is endemic. The U.S. is one of the most crime-ridden nations in the world today. One out of every five of its citizens has been mugged, robbed, assaulted, or had his or her house burglarized at least once during the past year. Our system of justice seems hardly able to cope: For every 500 serious crimes, only about 20 adults and five juveniles are sent to jail.

* Drug and alcohol abuse is common. One person in three reports that drinking is a problem in his home. Alcohol abuse leads to thousands of domestic disputes, homicides, suicides, and traffic fatalities. The death toll is estimated to run between 50,000 and 200,000 a year. The dollar cost - in medical bills, property damage, lost wages, and productivity - reaches $100 billion annually.

* One person in five says he knows of at least one case of child abuse in his neighborhood; and a like number know of at least one case of spouse abuse. Nearly half of America's marriages end in divorce, and one in every six births is illegitimate. The cost to the taxpayer is put at around $6 billion a year.

* An estimated 20% of the U.S. population is functionally illiterate - lacking the basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic needed for day-to-day living - and about 50% are just getting by. The National Commission on Excellence in Education recently concluded, "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and a people."

* Some 32 million Americans are defined as "poor," earning less than $9,287 for a family of four. Among young people joblessness is above 20%; among minority youth, close to 50%.

* Television, which the average person watches for six hours a day, is identified by two-thirds of the people as their primary source of information. A report by the National Institute of Mental Health, based on 10 years of research and more than 2,500 separate studies, concluded that "violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by some children and teenagers."

* Cheating is "epidemic and big business" across the U.S., Hattye Liston of North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University recently told the annual convention of the American Psychological Association. "Cheating," he said, "has become an American pastime."

  Liston cites these findings:
  * About $100 billion a year is lost through tax cheating.
  * Extramarital affairs are at "epidemic proportions."
  * Fradulent telephone charges cost millions annually.
  * Department stores lose more than $4 billion a year from pilferage.
  * Fourteen percent of students have defaulted on federal education loans.
  * About 60% of employees improperly use company postage meters.

* Cheating among high school and college students is commonplace. Supreme Court Justice Warren Burger has said, "We have virtually eliminated from the public schools any effort to teach values of integrity, truth, personal accountability and respect for others' rights."

* Only about half of the population votes in Presidential elections, half cannot name their congressmen, and politics ranks 34th on the list of career choices of high school students today.

Surveys show that the public has been disillusioned by the inability of the government and other social institutions to solve these pressing problems. In fact, public confidence in key institutions such as the Presidency, the courts, and big business is no higher today than in the immediate post-Watergate era. Its dissatisfaction with the political system -- overlong campaigns, wasteful spending, inaction in Washington -- is reflected in the lowest voting record of any major democracy in the world and a continuing negative image of politics and politicians among the populace.

In the face of the government's ineffectual response, the American people have begun to take matters into their own hands through a wide variety of direct citizen-involvement programs. Some examples of ways they are fighting back:

* Citizens groups have formed in the inner cities to rescue neighborhoods from blight.

* Communities have started programs to aid the fight against crime. FBI Director William H. Webster credits citizen involvement as an important factor in the recent drop in the crime rate.

* Organizations like MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) have galvanized public awareness and spurred tougher action. In 1982, for the third straight year, the number of traffic accidents and motor-vehicle-related deaths declined, a trend that experts attribute in part to more stringent enforcement of penalties against drunken driving.

* As many as 20 million Americans are now members of special-interest organizations, and another 20 million have contributed money to such groups during the past year.

* Parents are joining with teachers in new efforts to deal with problems facing young people, such as alcohol and drug abuse.

* Self-help groups for people who share a particular medical, emotional, or social problem are springing up everywhere. One estimate puts the total at more than 500,000 and the number of participants in the millions.

* Public concern about the impact of television, particularly on young people, is growing, as evidenced by organizations like the National Council for Children and Television.

The activity of volunteer groups such as these suggests that social change in the years ahead may come from the bottom up rather than the top down. This impetus from the grassroots will increasingly take the form of referendums and initiatives forcing government action.

Low Self-Esteem
A Root Problem

Many of our societal ills stem from a basic lack of a sense of self-worth among a large segment of the population. Indeed, low self-esteem is reported to be the number one psychological problem in contemporary society. And people who do not believe they are loveable often find that they are incapable of liking others and of functioning productively in society.

According to a study conducted by The Gallup Organization for the Robert Schuller Ministries, 37% of U.S. adults can be classified as having high self-esteem, 33% as average, and 30% as having low self-esteem. Marked differences are found between them. Persons with a strong sense of self-worth have fewer health problems, experience fewer difficulties related to stress, are more involved in charitable activities, feel they are more productive, and have fewer problems with alcohol.

A major factor contributing to low self-esteem among the populace is unemployment. Being out of work is embarrassing, painful, depressing, and stressful. Glenn E. Watts, president of the Communications Workers of America, has observed that if the Public Health Service rather than the Department of Labor were dealing with unemployment, it would be categorized as "a killer disease." He cited a Johns Hopkins University study showing that each 1% rise in joblessness is accompanied by an increase of 37,000 deaths -- including 27,000 fatal cardiovascular cases, 650 murders, and 920 suicides -- plus 4,000 additional admissions to state mental hospitals and 3,300 more criminals sentenced to prison.

Unemployment among young people, an acute problem for many years, is now running at high levels. Federal efforts to deal with it, which have reportedly cost more than $50 billion just since 1975, do not seem to have met with much success. Obviously, we need to find new approaches. Some countries, for example, have what are called "continuation schools," which allow students to learn a vocation two or three days of the week and take traditional courses the other two or three days to gain a broader background. Similarly it has been proposed that U.S. companies should be required to hire and give on-the-job training to 16- to 18-year olds, with the number prorated according to the size of the firm's full-time staff.

An alternative would be mandatory national service for all young people, with each participant given the option of military or non-military work, such as helping in hospitals, environmental projects, or improving inner-city ghettos. A good model for this is provided by the

Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930s, which inculcated a love of the land, discipline, and a sense of self-worth, while teaching transferable job skills. A new CCC could make a worthwhile contribution to the well-being of both the nation and its youth.

Are Values Collapsing?

An observer of the American scene might easily conclude from the multitude of serious problems afflicting the nation that our values are collapsing and we are becoming a disenchanted people. But neither proposition is true. Though we are probably more uncertain about our values today than in the past, surveys find that the American people still consider the personal aspects of their lives -- their family, health, and self-respect -- to be far more important than the possession of material goods.

Furthermore, Americans continue to believe in the traditional values. As many as 90%, for example, say they would welcome "more emphasis on family ties," and a similar proportion favors "more respect for authority." Only one in four would like to see "more acceptance of sexual freedom," and only one in eight would welcome "more acceptance of marijuana usage." While it may be true that the population is less spiritually committed than in the past, the vast majority say they wish their personal religious faith were stronger and that they want religion to play a greater role in society.

A remarkably high percentage of Americans express satisfaction with the way things are going in their own lives. This is particularly true with regard to the most important dimensions -- family life, relations with other people, health, and the quality of the communities in which they live. But at the same time there is a tragically wide gap in satisfaction levels between the top and bottom groups on the socioeconomic ladder. Those at the top need to find ways to reach down -- in a loving, caring manner -- and not only help those at the bottom but give them fresh hope.

Crisis Intervention Is Needed Today

What is called for is a kind of crisis intervention on a broad scale, with high self-esteem people meeting and working directly with low self-esteem people. As columnist Andy Rooney put it, "If you have your health, some happiness, some money in the bank, you don't need help. The chances are you ought to be helping someone who does need help." The first step

is caring in a deep way. If we truly care about the plight of others, we will do something - we will be impelled to action.

It is very difficult, however, to really care unless one comes face to face with people in need. We have to do more than spend money. Thoreau once said, "If you give money, spend yourself with it." If those who serve on boards or committees dealing with human needs, for example, matched every hour spent sitting in the boardroom with an hour of direct, face-to-face involvement with the less fortunate, society would feel the impact and our committee work would be given new life.

Nearly one person in three today is involved in direct person-to-person work with the underprivileged, the infirm, the handicapped, and the elderly. This massive volunteer effort is, of course, absolutely essential to our social well-being. (Imagine the impact if we could raise the proportion to one person in two!) The 12% of the population who are highly committed spiritually are also more involved in charitable activities and more concerned about the betterment of society than are those less spiritually committed - and far happier. (I shall expand on this point later.)

Despite their awareness of the many problems confronting our nation, the American people are far from despondent. Surveys show that they continue to have confidence in the future. There is a strong feeling that we are learning to adjust to the rapid rate of change that we have experienced in recent decades. And there is an abiding conviction that each of us as individuals can do much to turn things around.

Churches Will Help Shape Nation

Certainly the churches and synagogues of America will have a great deal to do with the shape of this nation in the immediate years ahead in their efforts to counteract some of the negative forces in our society.

In examining the role of religion in the U.S. today, I would like to try to shed light on three basic questions:

1. Just how vital is America's faith?

2. Are there signs of renewed interest in religion in America today?

3. And if so, what can churches do to tap this renewed interest and channel it into solid religious commitment?

A high level of religiosity is found in our nation: Nine in 10 state a religious preference; the vast majority say religion is important in their lives. Our basic beliefs are intact, whereas a decline in beliefs has occurred in certain Western European nations. Nine in 10 in the U.S. believe in God -- three in four in a personal God who watches over our actions; the large majority of us believe in heaven and hell, and at least half of us believe in a Devil.

Americans overwhelmingly pray and believe in prayer and can give examples of how prayer has worked in their lives. The large majority of Christians say that Jesus Christ has had an impact on their lives and believe in a "living, in-dwelling" Christ, as determined by a survey conducted for the Robert Schuller Ministries.

Americans attend church with remarkable frequency. Indeed, one of the best ways to reach the American people is through our churches since no fewer than six in 10 Americans attend church services at least once per month. Virtually every home has at least one Bible, although many of these Bibles have been collecting a lot of dust!

We have more confidence in the church than we do in the other key institutions of our society. We give our clergy high marks and half of us would be pleased if a son of ours were to decide to enter the clergy.

We want our children to have religious training. We want religion to play a greater role in society. We want our faith to grow.

The special appeal of religion to Americans is broadbased -- to persons of all faiths and ages and to persons at each level of formal education. Indeed, the United States is unique among the nations of the world in that we have both a high level of formal education and a high level of, at least, attested belief.

Religion Does Not Have Primacy

From the point of view of those who are religionists, these findings sound all very encouraging. Yet when we probe deeper, we soon discover that while religion continues to be a dominant force in the lives of Americans, it is not at the center of our lives -- it does not have primacy.

The vast majority of us say that religion is important in our lives but few say it is the most important influence in their lives. Few Christians say that they are making a truly earnest effort to follow the example of Jesus Christ in their lives. Most of us are willing to make sacrifices up to a certain point on behalf of our faith, but we will go only so far.

Using a special scale we developed to determine the level of spiritual commitment -- based on the answers of survey respondents to seven basic questions about their faith -- we find that only 12% of the populace falls into the category of "highly spiritually committed." Another 37% can be considered "fairly high" in commitment, while 36% are "fairly low," and 15% rank "very low" in spiritual commitment.

Americans say that religion is important, but they rank health, family, love and friends all ahead of religion. We feel that it is important that children have religious faith, but there are many traits that we put ahead of this one.

So that while religion has a powerful appeal for Americans, most of us fall into the category of nominal Christians. Despite the fact that eight in 10 Americans say they consider themselves to be Christians, and the fact that religious interest and involvement are high, commitment is low.

But A Rising Tide Of Religious Interest Noted

At the same time, however, there is a rising tide of interest in this nation in religious and spiritual matters. In a survey we conducted for the Christian Broadcasting Network, six in 10 Americans say they are more interested in religious and spiritual matters than they were five years ago. A majority of 56% say they are more reliant on God today than five years ago, while as many as four in 10 say their spiritual well-being has improved.

Those surveyed who say they are more reliant upon God give as their key reasons: a feeling of a closer personal relationship with God, a better understanding and knowledge of Him and His purposes (perhaps reflecting the upturn in Bible study we are noting), the often depressing world situation of tension and threat of war, and at least in some measure, a feeling of desperation: "Where else but to God does one turn in times like these?"

The survey also revealed a growing conviction that religion rather than science can answer the problems of the world, with 54% saying they are more likely than five years ago to feel that religion can answer the problems of the world and 26% saying less likely.

By way of comparison, 36% say they are now more likely than five years ago to believe science can answer the problems of the world, while 47% say they are less likely to do so. Americans, it would appear, are coming increasingly to a belief that the problems of the world will not be solved through technology and social engineering but through a change of heart and a turning to God.

These findings - plus earlier ones that show that Americans are concerned about faith development and want their faith to grow and want religion to play a greater role in society -- are exciting findings from the point of view of organized religion, and they represent a unique and unprecedented opportunity for the churches of America to tap this burgeoning interest in religion and channel it into solid religious commitment.

People are clearly searching for spiritual moorings in their lives with a new intensity. This search is taking the form of a growth in Bible study groups. Among adults, those involved in such groups has increased from 19% in 1978 to 26% today, in the CBN survey. Among teenagers, the increase has been even more pronounced.

In other surveys we have found that the percentage of persons involved in religious education classes over the last two years has been on a definite uptrend. More today are involved in evangelism. The charismatic movement shows no sign of abating.

Four In 10 Have Taken Part In Activities

The remarkable fact is four adults in 10 say they have recently taken part in one or more of the 10 religious activities (other than formal worship) that we tested in the CBN survey.

Among Protestants, the ratio is one in two.

The survey also suggests that these levels will continue to grow in the immediate future -- that the momentum in terms of religious involvement will continue to build.

One of the more interesting findings is that younger adults, who traditionally are less involved in organized religion than their elders, are involved in most of the activities tested to nearly the same extent as older people, and in some cases to a greater extent. And recent international surveys suggest that this new appeal of religion to young people may be world-wide in scope.

It is also important to note that persons with a college background are as likely to be involved in these religious activities as are persons with less formal education.

This growth in religious interest and involvement among the general public is also found among the college students of the United States.

In a *Newsweek on Campus Poll*, conducted by The Gallup Organization, we see a return to religion on the college campuses of America:

* The percentage of the nation's college students who say religion is very important in their lives has increased from 39% in 1975 and 1979 Gallup Polls to 50% in the current survey.

* Churchgoing has increased, with 39% of students saying they attend every week, compared to 34% in 1975.

* The proportion of college youth today who say their religious commitment has become stronger since they have been in college is twice the proportion who say it has become *weaker*.

How do we account for the increased interest in religious and spiritual matters?

There are, undoubtedly, many factors. Certainly discouragement over world affairs -- the threat of nuclear war, economic stress and our seeming inability to deal with problems in our society -- have contributed to our turning inward to draw upon our inner spiritual resources.

Disenchantment With Modern Lifestyles

To some extent, I believe our turning to religion arises from disenchantment with modern lifestyles and with what seems to be a lack of rules.

Certainly the electronic media have been a major factor in increasing interest in religion. Newspapers are beginning to treat religious news with new respect. Books dealing with religious topics have enormous appeal.

I think another factor that may help explain the upturn in religion is the growth in evangelism and outreach we note in surveys.

And finally -- and this I feel is a very important factor -- churches, and small groups organized for Bible study and prayer, answer an important need among Americans for supportive and dependable fellowship. The fact is, many Americans, we find in surveys, often feel intensely lonely and remote from other people. These feelings are coupled with the conviction that "people just don't seem to care about each other anymore." A solid majority, for example, believe that people today are less willing to help each other than they were a decade ago.

A burgeoning of interest in religion. A searching for spiritual moorings. A desire for a deeper understanding of one's faith. What does this mean for organized religion in the United States?

Period Of Opportunity For U.S. Churches

Clearly we are in a period of enormous opportunity for the churches of this nation and the challenge immediately ahead is clearly that of recognizing and understanding this interest, taping this interest, and forming it into solid religious commitment. There is a certain urgency about this, because this new interest in religious and spiritual matters could indeed take bizarre turns and lead to involvement in non-conventional religions and cults.

In fact, the new interest in religious and spiritual matters we see developing among the populace has not -- at least up to this point in time -- been reflected to any great extent in increased involvement in religion on the national level. Levels of church membership and

church attendance, for example, continue to remain flat.

Various explanations can be offered:

* Americans increasingly are finding spiritual nourishment outside formal worship -- in Bible study and prayer fellowship groups, for example.

* Churchgoing is becoming more a matter of taste than duty. One Gallup survey showed the vast majority of Americans saying that one could be a good Christian or Jew and not attend church.

* The growing interest in religious and spiritual matters, while not causing the level of church membership and attendance to rise, is at least stemming the downtrend.

* The impact of interest on involvement has not yet been felt.

What should churches do to meet the new spiritual needs of the American people?

Quite frankly, in my judgment, the need at this point in time is for churches to take a very practical, "how to" approach to America's spiritual needs. The emphasis should not only be on the "what" of religion -- helping people clarify what they believe and why -- but on the "how" of religion -- helping people understand what it means to be a disciple, how religious commitment can be deepened, how to live out one's faith.

For the fact is, much is in place in terms of the beliefs and religious practices of Americans. We are, at the very least, very favorably disposed toward religion. And we want our religious faith to deepen. It is up to the churches to tell us how to do this.

Need To Bring
Bible Into Lives

Specifically, there is a great need for helping people bring the Bible into their daily lives. For many the Bible remains inaccessible. We venerate the Bible, but we don't read it. Churches should train Bible study leaders and organize small Bible study groups.

And people need help with their prayer life. We pray but often in a superficial and totally

unstructured way. We don't give prayer the time it deserves. Prayer often does not have the transforming effect upon lives that it should. Here, too, churches can be of enormous help - by helping people develop their prayer lives.

Eight in 10 Americans believe God has a plan for their lives. A remarkable finding! Yet many Americans need professional help from churches in terms of living out this plan.

Churches Need
To 'Think Small'

Our religious institutions might also "think small" -- that is, build upon the new interest across the nation in small support groups. Columnist Mike McManus, who is, I believe, one of the most perceptive and effective Christian writers today, had this to say in his column, *Ethics & Religion*:

> The one difference I see between churchgoers and those with deep spiritual faith is that the latter meet frequently and in small groups with others in fellowship, prayer, and mutual support. In this setting, people can see the power of prayer and make the exciting discovery that God really cares about them personally.

The churches of America, the religious media, and religion book publishers also have another vital task -- raising the level of basic religious knowledge in the United States. This level is shockingly low; for example:

* Eight in 10 Americans consider themselves Christians but only half of these people know who, according to the Bible, delivered the Sermon on the Mount.

* A majority of Americans are unable to name more than half of the Ten Commandments.

Examine Core Of
Christians' Faith

In the effort to raise the level of religious knowledge, as well as deepen faith, it is important to examine the core of faith of persons of various religions. A major survey for the Robert Schuller Ministries explored the understanding, commitment, and relationship of

Americans to Jesus Christ. In commenting on the need for such a survey, Dr. Schuller said: "If the core of faith of Christians is not solid, all else can easily fall away."

Positive Trends

This survey of the impact of Jesus Christ on the lives of Americans reveals much that is positive from a religious perspective:

* Seven in 10 (and higher proportions among those who state a religious preference or consider themselves Christians) have the basic assurance that God loves them to "a great extent."

* The large majority of Americans see Jesus in a divine context. About half (52%) express absolute assurance that Jesus Christ is divine.

* Jesus Christ is seen as a living, in-dwelling Christ, personal and approachable, not merely a historical figure. A majority of Americans say they have encountered Jesus Christ in their lives, and four in 10 say they have had a "born again" conversion experience, usually gradual, when they committed their lives to Jesus Christ.

* America's image of Jesus Christ is to some extent murky, yet he is viewed overwhelmingly in a favorable light, with little difference in perceptions found on the basis of age, sex, level of education, and the like.

* Jesus Christ is seen as the ideal role model for both men and women and has powerful appeal even to those who do not believe in his divinity. A total of 66% express total conviction that Jesus was "without sin" while 59% believe, without qualification, that Jesus was, in all respects, perfect.

* Jesus Christ is seen as personifying selfless love. This is the key attribute ascribed to him. To the devout, his life and death are seen as revealing God's love. Other traits frequently used to describe him are his kindness, compassion, and capacity to forgive.

* Further evidence of the public's awareness and response to Jesus Christ's central message of love and forgiveness is seen in the fact that one of the three responses

on Jesus Christ's mission on earth was "to show us how to really love one another." Furthermore, survey respondents choose most often (from a list of 15 items) these categories as most important in trying to be a follower of Jesus Christ (after the top choice, "to obey the Ten Commandments"): "to forgive those who have wronged them," and to "put others' needs before their own."

* Whether or not Jesus Christ is viewed in divine terms, the majority believe Jesus Christ, as a moral and ethical teacher, has had a great deal of impact upon their lives. Only 7% say "hardly any" or "none."

* A majority (and larger majorities among the more religiously committed groups) say their relationship with Jesus Christ increases their sense of self-worth and makes them feel better about themselves.

* Americans overwhelmingly pray, believe that prayer works, rely on prayer to nourish their faith, hold that prayer is necessary in order to truly know God, and report that prayer has a very positive effect upon their lives.

* A large proportion of Americans (and even larger proportions among the devout groups in the survey) seek to come closer to following the example of Jesus Christ, and significant proportions believe their relationship with Jesus Christ to be actually deepening.

* Most seem to believe that following Jesus Christ is a difficult or impossible task, an unattainable ideal; only 10% of the total sample say they come "very close" to following the example of Jesus Christ.

* Those who say they are trying hard to follow Jesus Christ are among the most devout in the survey and tend to believe they come closer to following Jesus Christ's example than do those who are not making greater efforts to follow him.

Negative Trends

Although the survey reveals much that is positive about the impact of Jesus Christ on the lives of Americans, it also reveals certain *negative* aspects (from a religious perspective):

* While most of those who consider themselves Christians see Jesus in a divine context, a significant proportion apparently find it difficult to believe that Jesus Christ was, in fact, God living among men. And a significant proportion of those who say they are Christians are less than certain that Jesus Christ was divine, while others hold the belief that one can be a true Christian and not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

* While a majority believe Jesus Christ was "without sin," a not insignificant proportion (one third) are less than totally convinced, and four in 10 express at least some doubts about Jesus' being perfect.

* While many say their relationship with Jesus Christ increases their sense of self-worth a great deal, a significant proportion say otherwise.

* Many say they are making a considerable effort to follow the example of Jesus Christ, but significant proportions say they are not.

* While many in the survey feel their relationship with Jesus Christ is deepening, 20% do not.

* Many (even among the devout) appear not to be living out their faith -- that is, putting their faith into action. Significant proportions say they have not (or have only infrequently) given time to help someone who was sick or in need.

* From an orthodox Christian point of view, many of those who consider themselves to be Christians hold views which are inconsistent with traditional beliefs.

* A large number of the religiously uncommitted (as well as a significant proportion of the committed) say they have never in church felt that they are "a wonderful person."

* The survey reveals a low level of Biblical knowledge, even among the more religiously committed segments of the population. For example, only about two in five survey respondents know that Jesus Christ, according to the Bible, delivered the Sermon on the Mount.

* Prayer plays an important role in the lives of Americans, but relatively few fall in the category of frequent prayers, and fewer still "live a life of prayer," the ultimate goal of a truly devout person.

Conclusion

If churches become intensely practical in their approach, I believe they are likely to have at least some success in moving the populace to deeper and deeper levels of religious and spiritual commitment. The key question now is -- what difference does a high level of spiritual commitment make in the life of the individual and of society as a whole? If a deeply-held faith is not evidenced in such respects, one might certainly challenge its authenticity.

Yet the findings we have recorded on spiritual commitment are dramatic and destroy the assertion that is sometimes made that deeply religious people tend to be self-satisfied, more interested in their own spiritual welfare than the good of their neighbors, socially apathetic, and even to some extent intolerant of persons who differ from them in terms of backgrounds and religious persuasions.

The fact is, the 12% who fit our category of "highly spiritually committed" are a "breed apart" from the rest of the populace in at least four key respects:

1. They are more satisfied with their ' in life than are those who are less spiritually committed -- and far happier. A total of 68% of the highly spiritually committed say they are "very happy," compared to 46% of the moderately spiritually committed, 39% of the moderately uncommitted, and 30% of the highly uncommitted.

2. They tend to place greater importance on family life than do persons in the less spiritually committed categories.

3. They tend to be more tolerant of persons of different races and religions than are those who are less spiritually committed.

4. They are vitally concerned about the betterment of society and are, for example, far more involved in charitable activities than are their counterparts. A total of 46% of the highly spiritually committed say they are presently working among the poor, the infirm and the elderly, compared to 36% among the moderately committed, 28% of the moderately

uncommitted, and 22% of the highly uncommitted.

What makes these findings even more remarkable is the fact that these persons tend to be somewhat more downscale than the population as a whole and "downscale groups," surveys have shown, tend to be less happy and less satisfied with their lot in life than do "upscale groups," less tolerant of persons of different races and religions, and finally, less involved in charitable activities. So despite enormous pressures, economic and otherwise, these people appear to be living out their faith to a remarkable extent. The "highly spiritually committed" do show evidence that their deep faith is having a transforming effect on their lives.

There is a real urgency for churches and synagogues to channel the new interest in religious and spiritual matters into deep spiritual commitment -- not only because weak commitment can easily lead people into counterfeit religions, but also because of the climate of immorality we are noting in the nation today. For example, new survey evidence clearly indicates that mere church involvement, without a strong faith commitment, does not exert much power in our ethical lives.

In the survey for The Wall Street Journ noted earlier, it was discovered that two-thirds of Americans (65%) think the overall level of ethics in American society has declined in the past decade, while 22% feel this level has stayed about the same, and 9% think the level has risen.

The survey also indicated that a large proportion of persons interviewed are willing to concede that they themselves are adding to the general moral laxity in society.

Most shocking of all, little difference is found in the ethical views and behavior of the unchurched and the churched (defined in the survey as those who both belong to a church and have attended a regular service in the last six months). The behavioral items tested in the survey included those related to lying, cheating, pilferage, and non-reporting of theft.

These findings shed light on the seeming religion-morality paradox noted earlier, and underscore the need for religious leaders to develop new strategies for channeling America's spiritual quest into deep spiritual commitment. For, as noted, the "highly spiritually committed" do differ dramatically from the rest of the populace in attitudes, outlook, and behavior.

Whether or not the churches of America are successful in moving the populace to deeper levels of spiritual commitment remains to be seen but certainly immediate efforts are called

for today as Americans seek spiritual fulfillment with a new intensity and with a new sense of urgency.

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IMPORTANT NOTES TO READERS

The Sample: The sampling procedure of the Gallup Poll is designed to produce samples which are representative of the U.S. civilian adult poulation. National survey results are based on in-person interviews with a minimum of 1,500 adults. In certain sets of findings, numerous surveys have been combined to build up the sample base.

Sampling tolerances: In interpreting survey results, it should be remembered that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error, that is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population had been interviewed. Samples of 1,500 have a tolerance within 3 percentage points 95 percent of the time. Certain population groups are not reported separately for many surveys because the number of persons in the sample is not enough to provide sufficiently accurate results.

Jews in sample: For many sets of survey results in this report, there are an insufficient number of Jews in the sample to provide projectible data.

Denomination headings: In some cases, churches of the same family have been grouped under general headings -- for example, "Methodist churches" -- because the size of the sample does not permit reporting churches within that group.

Projecting survey results: The survey results in this report can be projected to the total (civilian, non-institutionalized) adult population. For this purpose, use a total adult, civilian, non-institutionalized population figure of approximately 166 million (at mid-point in 1983).

Survey dates: The latest findings are based on surveys conducted in 1983 and 1984.

II.

STATE OF THE CHURCH

A. Attitudinal Indicators

Public Assesses Role Of Religion In U.S.

For the first time since 1976 the proportion of Americans who say religion is losing its influence on society is balanced by the number who say it is increasing its influence.

In the latest (1983) survey, 42% say losing while 44% say increasing. Another 9% feel that religion is neither losing nor increasing its influence while 5% do not express an opinion.

Between 1957 and 1970 the proportion who saw religion becoming less influential on American life rose dramatically, from 14% to 75%. By 1976, however, this percentage had declined to 45%.

These findings parallel survey results from a study conducted for the Christian Broadcasting Network which show a majority (56%) of Americans saying they are more interested in religious and spiritual matters than they were five years ago.

Question Asked Since 1957

Following is the question that has been asked in 16 surveys since 1957:

"At the present time, do you think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life or losing its influence?"

Of considerable interest is the fact that the proportion saying religion is losing its influence differs little on the basis of age, region of the nation, sex, and educational level.

Protestants, Catholics Differ In Their Views

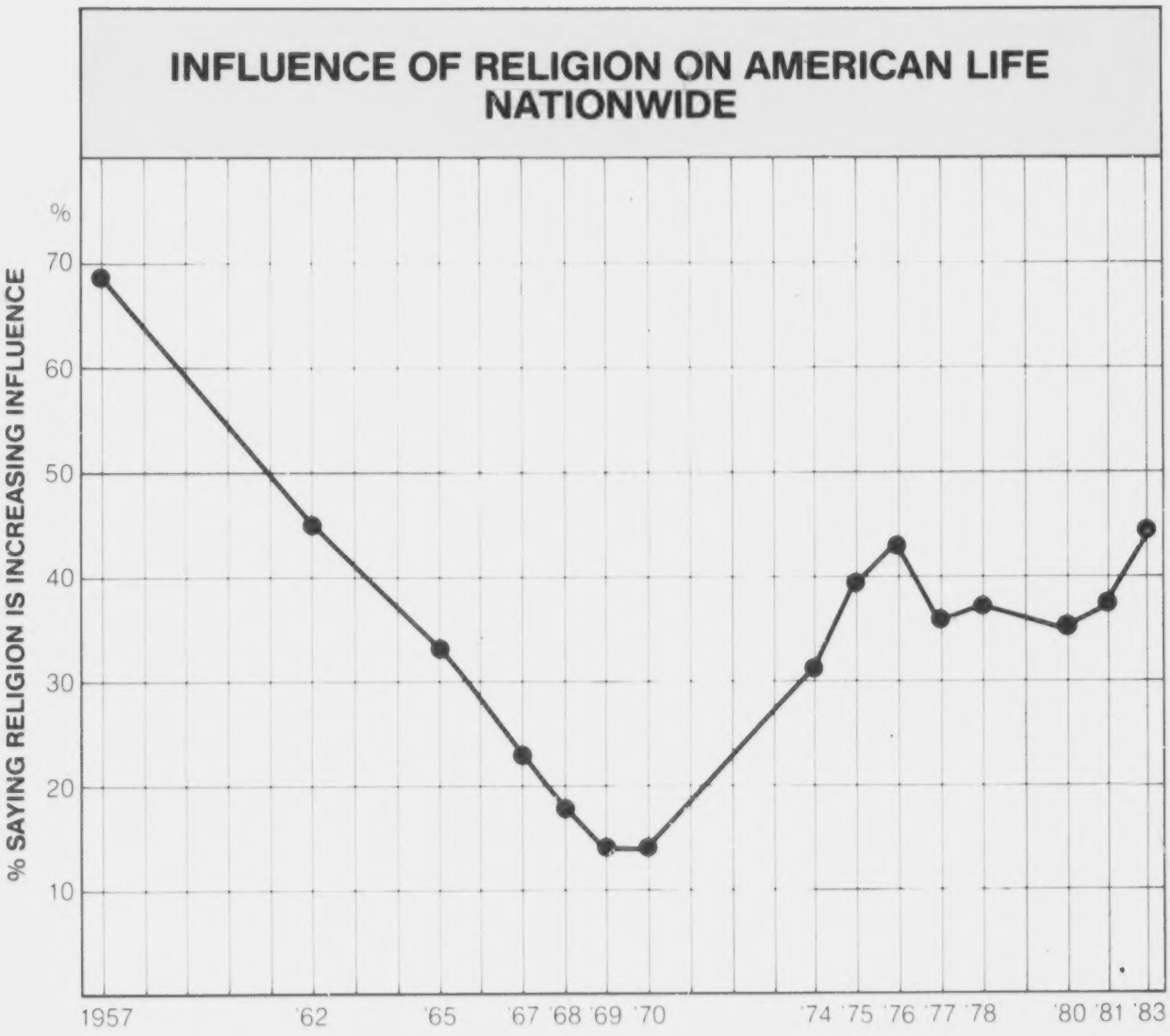
Some differences, however, are noted in the perceptions of Protestants and Catholics. The former lean 48% to 40% to the view that religion is increasing rather than losing its influence on society, while Catholics are evenly divided in their views.

Regular churchgoers are somewhat less inclined than are non-churchgoers or irregular attenders to say that religion is losing its influence on American life.

Following is the full national trend. The proportions saying "the same" or "don't know" are not included in the table.

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON AMERICAN LIFE

	Increasing %	Losing %
1983	44	42
1982	37	46
1981	38	46
1980	35	46
1978	37	48
1977	36	45
1976	44	45
1975	39	51
1974	56	31
1970	14	75
1969	14	70
1968	18	67
1967	23	57
1965	33	45
1962	45	31
1957	69	14


INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON AMERICAN LIFE NATIONWIDE
% SAYING RELIGION IS INCREASING INFLUENCE
%
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
1957
'62
'65
'67
'68
'69
'70
'74
'75
'76
'77
'78
'80
'81
'83

Here are the latest results by key groups:

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON AMERICAN LIFE

Question: "At the present time, do you think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life or losing its influence?"

	Increasing %	Losing %	No difference %	Don't know %
NATIONAL	44	42	9	5
SEX				
Men	45	40	10	5
Women	44	43	8	5
AGE				
Total under 30 years	43	46	8	3
18-24 years	39	48	9	4
15-29 years	50	44	4	2
30-49 years	52	37	8	3
Total 50 and older	38	43	11	8
50-64 years	38	48	10	4
65 and older	39	38	11	12
REGION				
East	43	44	9	4
Midwest	43	44	10	3
South	43	42	9	6
West	51	36	7	6
RACE				
Whites	45	41	9	5
Blacks	37	49	10	4
EDUCATION				
College graduates	51	36	8	5
College incomplete	47	40	10	3
High school graduates	41	49	7	3
Less than H. S. grads	42	39	11	8
POLITICS				
Republicans	51	36	8	5
Democrats	40	48	8	4
Independents	46	38	10	6
RELIGION				
Protestants	48	40	7	5
Catholics	43	43	10	4

Of 10 Key Institutions, Americans Express Most Confidence In Organized Religion

---

Public Trust, However, No Higher Than In Watergate Era

The public's confidence in the nation's most important institutions is no higher today than it was a decade ago, in the Watergate period. In the case of some of the institutions tested, confidence has actually fallen since 1973.

Institutions now accorded about the same degree of public confidence as 10 years ago include: The church or organized religion, the U.S. Supreme Court, newspapers, big business, and organized labor.

On the other hand, the public schools, Congress, and television now receive markedly lower confidence ratings than in the earlier survey.

Religion Rated Highest

Today, as in each of the previous surveys, the church or organized religion is the highest rated institution tested, with 62% of survey participants saying they have "a great deal" or "quite a lot" of confidence in it. In 1973, 66% expressed a similar amount of confidence in the church.

Next in the current survey is the military, with 53% saying they have a high degree of confidence in this institution, followed by banks and banking (51%).

In the next tier are the U.S. Supreme Court (42%), the public schools (39%), and newspapers (38%). Congress and big business each receives positive confidence ratings from 28% of the public.

The last two institutions on this year's list are organized labor (26%) and television (25%). In the

1973 survey organized labor was favorably rated by 30% of the public and television by 37%.

Here is the question asked and highlights of the trend:

"I am going to read you a list of institutions in American society. Would you tell me how much confidence you, yourself, have in each one -- a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?"

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS
(% saying "great deal or "quite a lot")

	1983 %	1981 %	1979 %	1977 %	1975 %	1973 %
Church or organized religion	62	64	65	64	68	66
Military.....	53	50	54	57	58	NA
Banks and banking	51	46	60	NA	NA	NA
U.S. Supreme Court.....	42	46	45	46	49	44
Public schools	39	42	53	54	NA	58
Newspapers	38	35	51	NA	NA	39
Congress.....	28	29	34	40	40	42
Big business	28	20	32	33	34	26
Organized labor	26	28	36	39	38	30
Television.....	25	25	38	NA	NA	37

NA = Not asked.

Schools' Rating Reflects Commission's Findings

The sharp decline in confidence in the public schools, from 58% in the 1973 survey to 39% at present, comes at a time of wide-spread public dissatisfaction with public education. This loss of confidence was recently reflected in the findings of the bipartisan National Commission on Excellence in Education. The Commission's report concluded, "The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and as a people."

Young Adults' Views Offer Little Cause for Optimism

The current views of young adults (18-29 years old) offer little cause for optimism for the immediate future. The proprotion of young people expressing a high degree of confidence is no higher than that of persons 30 and over in the case of five of the institutions tested, and in some cases is lower.

The following table shows the percentage of adults in each of three age groups expressing a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in the institutions tested, ranked from the highest to lowest on the basis of the total sample:

CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS
(% saying "great deal" or "quite a lot")

	18-29 years	30-49 years	50 & over
Church or organized religion.....	55%	61%	69%
Military.....	49	49	58
Banks and banking.....	46	44	59
U. S. Supreme Court.....	47	42	38
Public schools	34	40	40
Newspapers	45	34	36
Congress.....	29	25	30
Big business	31	24	29
Organized labor	36	22	22
Television.....	23	25	24

PERCENT EXPRESSING A 'GREAT DEAL' OF CONFIDENCE IN THE CHURCH OR ORGANIZED RELIGION (1983 RESULTS)

	Great deal %	Quite a lot %	Some %	Very little %	None %	Don't know %
NATIONAL	39	23	26	9	1	2
SEX						
Men	37	24	28	9	1	1
Women	42	22	24	9	1	2
REGION						
East	34	23	31	9	1	2
Midwest	43	26	22	8	1	*
South	46	21	23	6	2	2
West	33	19	32	13	2	1
AGE						
18-29 years	31	24	33	9	2	1
30-49 years	39	22	26	10	1	2
50 & over	46	23	21	7	1	2
EDUCATION						
College	32	25	32	9	1	1
High school	39	24	26	9	1	1
Grade school	57	15	15	8	2	3
RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE						
Protestants	46	24	22	5	2	1
Catholics	39	26	27	7	*	2

*Less than one percent.

66% of Americans Describe Their Chances of Going To Heaven as 'Excellent' or 'Good'

Two Americans in every three (66%) describe their chances of going to Heaven as "excellent" or "good," while 34% say they are "only fair" or "poor."

Persons with a college background are more optimistic (77% see their chances of going to Heaven as excellent or good) than are persons with a high school background (61%) or with only a grade school education (66%). Protestants and Catholics hold closely comparable beliefs.

QUESTIONS AND DETAILED FINDINGS

Here is the question asked in the survey and the findings in tabular form:

How would you describe your own chances of going to Heaven – excellent, good, only fair, or poor?

Here are the results, based on the 71% who believe there is a Heaven:

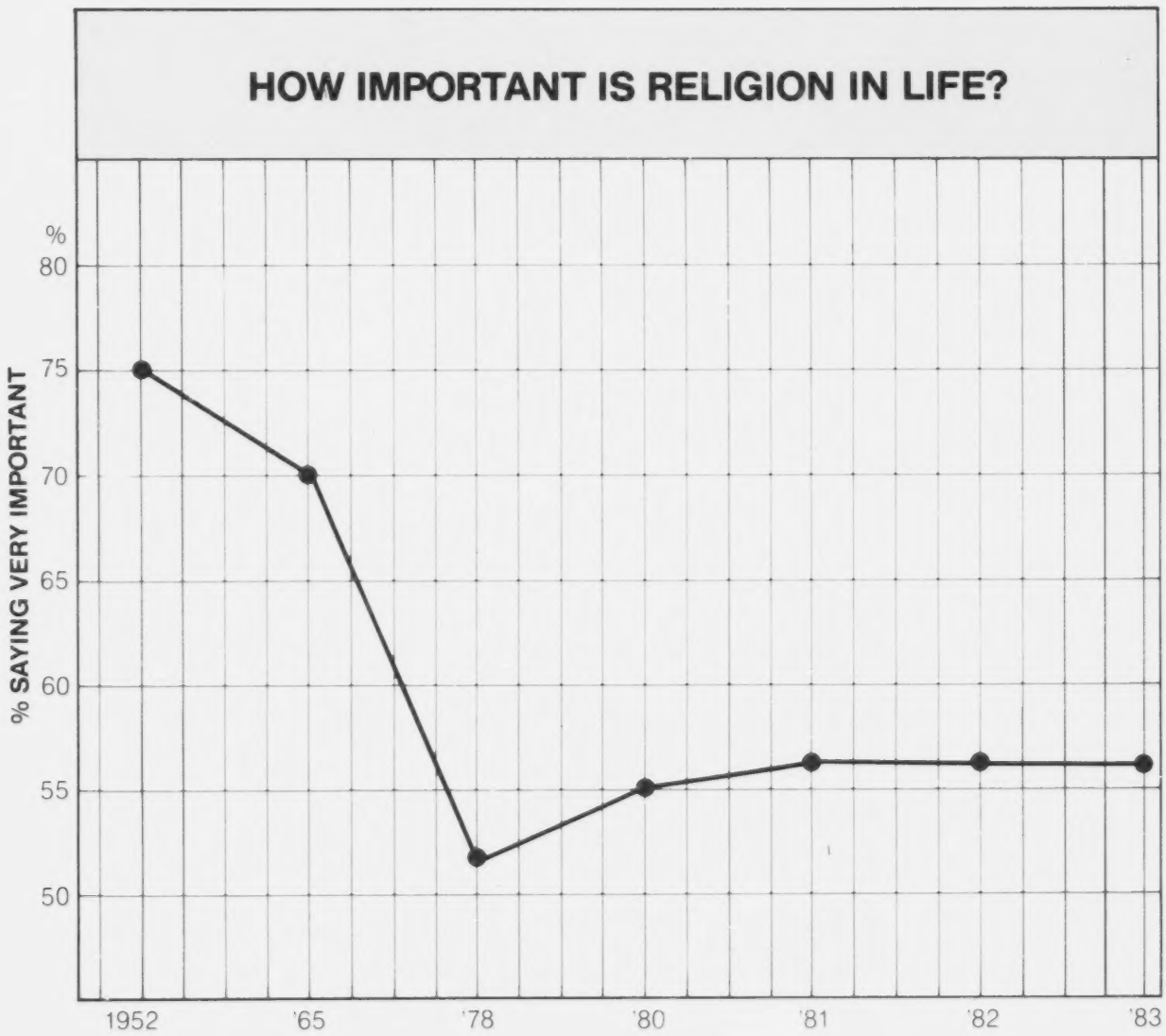
CHANCES OF GOING TO HEAVEN

	Excellent, good %	Only fair, poor %
National	66	34
College education	77	23
High school	61	39
Grade school	66	34
Protestants	67	33
Catholics	65	35
East	64	36
Midwest	70	30
South	64	36
West	63	37

(Note: The no opinion category has been excluded from the above table.)

These findings are from a major survey on the afterlife. The full results are reported in *Adventures in Immortality* (by George Gallup Jr. and William Proctor and published by McGraw Hill in 1982).

B. Self-assessment


HOW IMPORTANT IS RELIGION IN LIFE?
% SAYING VERY IMPORTANT
%
80
75
70
65
60
55
50
1952
'65
'78
'80
'81
'82
'83

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION IN PERSONAL LIFE

Religion Very Important To Majority Of Public

A majority of U.S. adults (56%) say religion is "very important" in their lives, while 30% say "fairly important" and 13% "not very important."

These findings, based on an average of three surveys conducted during 1983, are virtually the same as those recorded over the last three years, indicating a remarkable stability in this trend.

The percentage of Americans who say religion is very important in their lives plunged from 75% in 1952 to 52% in 1978, but since that time has levelled out.

Following is the question asked in each survey:

"How important would you say religion is in your own life — very important, fairly important, or not very important."

Here is the trend by key groups for selected years:

HOW IMPORTANT RELIGION IN LIFE?

	Very %	Fairly %	Not very %	No opinion %
1983	56	30	13	1
1982	56	30	13	1
1981	56	29	14	1
1980	55	31	13	1
1978	52	32	14	2
1965	70	22	7	1
1952	75	20	5	*

*Less than one percent.

Here are the trends for Protestants and Catholics:

Responses of Protestants

	Very %	Fairly %	Not very %	No opinion %
1983	61	29	9	1
1982	64	28	8	*
1980	61	30	8	1
1978	60	31	8	1
1965	74	20	5	1
1952	76	20	4	*

Responses of Catholics

	Very %	Fairly %	Not very %	No opinion %
1983	56	34	9	1
1982	56	36	7	1
1980	56	34	9	1
1978	51	36	11	2
1965	76	20	3	1
1952	83	14	3	*

The following tables show the trend for men and women:

Responses of Men

	Very %	Fairly %	Not very %	No opinion %
1983	49	32	17	2
1982	48	32	19	1
1980	48	34	17	1
1978	46	35	18	1
1965	63	26	10	1
1952	68	22	8	2

Responses of Women

	Very %	Fairly %	Not very %	No opinion %
1983	62	28	9	1
1982	63	28	8	1
1980	62	27	10	1
1978	58	29	11	2
1965	77	18	4	1
1952	79	18	3	*

*Less than one percent

RELIGION 'VERY IMPORTANT' IN PERSONAL LIFE

- Protestant Groups of Churches -

	1983 %	1982 %	1980 %	1965 %	1952 %
Baptists	69	64	68	82	84
Methodists	56	71	52	65	74
Lutherans	55	54	57	66	70
Presbyterians	55	45	48	71	72
Episcopalians	37	53	37	61	67

See Religion More Important In Future

A total of 51% of adults say they think religion will be more important in their lives five years from now than it is today, while 39% expect little change from today and 7% say less.

Most likely to say religion will be more important in their lives five years from now are women, Protestants, evangelicals and those who are conservative in their religious philosophy.

Of particular interest are the findings by age groups. Nearly as high a proportion of persons between 18 and 29 years old say religion will be more important in their lives, as persons over the age of 29.

The results for the young adult group:

Responses of 18-24 age group

	Very %	Fairly %	Not very %	No opinion %
1983	44	40	14	2
1982	43	41	16	*
1980	43	41	15	1
1978	37	43	19	1
1965	57	32	10	1
1952	64	30	6	1

Less than one percent.

Third Say Religion 'Most Important' Thing In Lives

While a majority of U.S. adults today (56%) say religion is "very important" in their lives, fewer (31%) say their religious beliefs are the "most important thing" in their lives.

Age is a key factor, with only 14% of the 18-24 year-old age group indicating their religious beliefs are the dominant factor in their lives. This percentage is nearly doubled in the 25-29 year-old age group, while among those 30 to 49 years-old the proportion is 31% and among those 50 and older the figure is 41%.

Baptists are the most likely to say religion is very important in their lives, while Episcopalians are least likely to say this

CLERGY RATED HIGHEST ON HONESTY IN NEW SURVEY

Of 24 occupations studied, the public rates clergymen and pharmacists highest in terms of their perceived "honesty and ethical standards."

Clergymen, as in each of the earlier surveys, come out at the top of the scale, with 64% of respondents giving them a very high or high rating. Next are pharmacists or druggists, with a 61% positive rating.

Following closely are medical doctors, dentists, college teachers, engineers, and policemen, with positive scores ranging from 53% to 42%.

In the next tier are bankers, TV reporters or commentators, funeral directors, newspaper reporters and lawyers, with ratings from 38% to 24%.

Ten occupational groups are given very high or high ratings by 19% to 12%. These are stockbrokers, business executives, Senators, building contractors, local political officeholders, Congressmen, realtors, state political officeholders, insurance salesmen, and labor union leaders.

Advertising practitioners and car salesmen occupy the last two positions, receiving positive ratings from 8% and 6% of survey respondents, respectively.

HOW IMPORTANT IS RELIGION IN YOUR OWN LIFE?

	Very Important %	Fairly Important %	Not very Important %	No opinion %
NATIONAL	56	30	13	1
SEX				
Men	49	32	17	2
Women	62	28	9	1
RACE				
Whites	54	31	14	1
Blacks	69	25	5	2
EDUCATION				
College graduates	45	32	22	1
College incomplete	52	34	13	1
High school graduates	55	32	12	1
Less than H. S. graduates	57	30	11	2
AGE				
Total Under 30 years	43	39	16	2
18-24 years	44	40	14	2
25-29 years	42	37	19	2
30-49 years	53	31	14	2
50 and older	66	23	10	1
50-64 years	62	26	10	2
65 and older	73	17	9	1
REGION				
East	48	34	17	1
Midwest	65	25	8	2
South	54	33	11	2
West	52	29	18	1
POLITICS				
Republicans	59	29	11	1
Democrats	58	29	12	1
Independents	49	34	15	2
INCOME				
$15,000 income and over	51	33	15	1
Under $15,000 income	63	26	10	2
RELIGION				
Protestants	61	29	9	1
Catholics	56	34	9	1
Jews	25	51	24	*
Southern Baptists	72	23	4	1
Lutherans	55	33	11	1
Methodists	56	34	9	1
Presbyterians	55	32	11	2
Episcopalians	37	37	25	1
MARITAL STATUS				
Married	58	30	11	1
Single	43	35	20	2
Widowed	73	18	8	1
Currently divorced/separated	52	32	14	2
URBANIZATION				
Center cities	53	31	15	1
Suburbs	51	33	15	1
Rural areas	61	27	10	2

*Less than one percent.

Research Probes Americans' Level Of Spiritual Commitment

To determine levels of spiritual commitment, a new scale was devised by Gallup researchers to try to shed light on the question: Who are the people in our society who live their faith on the deepest level?

Theologians, sociologists and clergy of various denominations were consulted and a scale of seven items or statements was developed. Survey respondents were asked whether they feel each statement is "completely true," "mostly true," "mostly untrue" or "completely untrue." The scale did not include religious involvement or participation items, since these do not necessarily tell us about spiritual commitment. The scale used sought to determine the proportion of the adult population who say they believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, who tell us their religious beliefs are the most important influence in their lives, who constantly seek God's will through prayer, who believe that God loves them in spite of their frailties, who gain a great deal of comfort and support from their religious beliefs, who try to put their religious beliefs into practice in their relations with persons of different races, religious and other background questions, and finally, who wish their religious beliefs to grow even stronger.

The scale of spiritual commitment is based on the extent to which survey respondents felt each of seven selected items -- pertaining to spiritual commitment -- were completely true, moderately ture, moderately untrue or completely untrue.

Each completely true item was scored as a 1, each moderately true item was scored as a 2,

moderately untrue was scored as 3, and completely untrues were scored as 4s.

Using this scaling approach, the survey respondents were distributed into four groups, including the highly committed spiritually with an obtained score of 7, moderately committed, 8-12; moderately uncommitted 13-21; and highly uncommitted 22-35.

To be considered "highly spiritually committed," a person had to answer "completely true" to all seven statements. A total of 12% of our total sample did so.

The following table shows the percentages responding "completely true" to each item, ranked on the basis of frequency of mention:

* I believe that God loves me even though I may not always please him	61%
* I believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ	60
* I wish my religious faith were stronger	46
* I receive a great deal of comfort and support from my religious beliefs	38
* I try hard to put my religious beliefs into practice in my relations with all people including people of different races, religions, nationalities and backgrounds	37
* I constantly seek God's will through prayer	26
* My religious faith is the most important influence in my life	26
Net of those saying completely true to all 7 statements:	12%

The following table shows the levels of "spiritual commitment":

SPIRITUAL COMMITMENT

Very high level of spiritual commitment	12%
Fairly high level of spiritual commitment	37
Fairly low level of spiritual commitment	36
Very low level of spiritual commitment	15
	100%

60% OF PUBLIC GAVE MONEY TO RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN 12-MONTH PERIOD TESTED

As many as six in 10 U.S. adults gave money to religious organizations during a 12-month test period.

This audit of the donation of time and money of Americans, based on a survey conducted earlier this year for the Robert F. Schuller Ministries, also shows that one-third of adults had donated time to helping the poor, disadvantaged or needy people in the previous 12 months.

Survey respondents were handed a card with six statements and asked this question:

On this card read off the letters of the things you have done in the past 12 months.

Here are the national findings:

DONATION OF MONEY AND TIME

	%
Donated money to a charitable cause	67
Gave money to a religious organization	60
Donated time to helping poor, disadvantaged or needy people	34
Donated time to religious work	28
Wrote a letter to a political official or signed a political petition	20
Sent contribution to one of the television ministries	8
None, don't know	14

55% GIVE POPE JOHN PAUL II 'HIGHLY FAVORABLE' VOTE

A majority of 55% give Pope John Paul II a "highly favorable" rating. This rating is based on the top two positions (plus 5 and plus 4) on a 10-point attitude scale, called the Stapel Scalometer, which measures intensity of feeling, both positive and negative.

The table shows the trend in the Pope's positive ratings since December, 1978. His tour of the U.S. in 1979 clearly boosted his rating, which he sustained in subsequent measurements. The June, 1981 figure may reflect, in part, sympathy for the Pope following the attempt on his life.

The latest figure is based on a survey conducted in January, 1984. As seen below, Catholic opinion has held firm but Protestant views have declined somewhat since June, 1981:

Pope John Paul II
(Plus 5, plus 4 ratings)

	Nat. %	Cath. %	Prot. %
January, 1984	55	82	48
June, 1982	54	80	46
June, 1981	65	83	60
(assassination attempt)			
May, 1980	59	85	51
October, 1979 ...	56	80	47
(tour of U.S.)			
September, 1979 .	48	73	38
June, 1979	52	70	45
December, 1978 ..	47	67	41

By way of comparison, here are the "highly favorable" ratings given previous Popes:

	Nat. %	Cath. %	Prot. %
POPE PAUL VI (1963-1978)			
1977 (May)	37	66	26
1976 (May)	25	48	19
POPE JOHN XXII (1958-1963)			
1960 (Sept.)	32	76	16
(Aug.)	32	75	17
(July)	34	77	19
(May)	34	77	20

C. Religious Identification

9 In 10 Adults State A Religious Preference

Nine in every 10 adults in the latest surveys state a specific religious preference, with 56% saying they are Protestants, 29% Catholics and 2% Jews. The remainder state a preference for another church or religion (4%), while 9% claim no religious preference.

Since 1947 the proportion of Catholics in the population grew dramatically (from 20% in 1947 to 29% in recent years), while Protestants declined from 69% to 56%. The proportion of Jews fell from 5% in 1947 to 2% in the 70s and 80s. In the case of most of these shifts, the most pronounced changes occurred during the 1947 - 1972 period.

Here is the qustion asked to determine religious affiliation or preference and the trend:

"What is your religious preference - Protestant, Roman Catholic, Jewish or an Orthodox church such as the Greek or Russian Orthodox Church?"

It should be borne in mind that many of those who state a religious preference may not be formally affiliated with any religious body, yet they do claim a religious identity of some kind.

TREND IN RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE

	Protestant	Catholic	Jewish	Other	None
	%	%	%	%	%
- Yearly -					
1983	56	29	2	4	9
1982	57	29	2	4	8
1981	59	28	2	4	7
1980	61	28	2	2	7
1979	59	29	2	2	8
1977-78	60	29	2	1	8
1976	61	27	2	4	6
1975	61	27	2	4	6
1974	60	27	2	5	6
- By 5-year periods -					
1972	63	26	2	4	5
1967	67	25	3	3	2
1957	66	26	3	1	3
1952	67	25	4	1	2
1947	69	20	5	1	6

(Note: Results for some years do not add to 100% because of rounding.)

The table immediately below shows the change between 1947 and 1983 in the proportions claiming a preference for each of the three major religious groups:

CHANGE IN RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE

	1947 %	1983 %	Point change	Proportional change %
Catholics	20	29	9	+ 45
Protestants	69	56	13	- 17
Jews	5	2	3	- 60

Protestant Church Preferences Today

The highest proportion of Protestants in the U.S. give their religious preference as Southern Baptist, followed by those who say they are affiliated with the United Methodist Church.

In terms of the overall broad groupings of Protestant churches, Baptists are first (21% name a Baptist church as their religious preference), followed by Methodists (10%), Lutherans (7%), Presbyterians (3%), Episcopalians (2%), United Church of Christ (2%), and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (2%).

Although religious preference for each of five major Protestant groupings has remained stable over the last five years, the current figures are lower than those recorded prior to 1978, as seen in the accompanying table. For example, the proportion of adults who consider themselves Presbyterians is down by one-third from the earlier measurements, while a similar fall-off has occurred among Episcopalians.

In assessing these findings, it is important to bear in mind that the percentages indicate preference for a particular denomination and not membership in this church. To determine denominational preference, all survey respondents who indicated their religious preference as Protestant were handed a card listing the major denominations and asked to indicate their preference from this list.

The following table shows the latest results based on in-person interviews with 30,739 adults in 1983:

Here is the trend by major church groupings:

TRENDS IN PROTESTANT CHURCH PREFERENCES

	Baptists %	Methodists %	Lutherans %	Presbyterians %	Episcopalians %
1983.....	21	10	7	3	2
1982.....	19	10	6	4	2
1981.....	19	10	6	4	2
1980.....	19	10	6	4	2
1979.....	19	11	6	4	2
1978.....	19	11	6	4	2
1976.....	21	11	7	5	3
1975.....	20	11	7	5	3
1974.....	21	14	7	6	3
1969.....	20	14	7	6	3
1967.....	21	14	7	6	3

Interesting Patterns By Age Groupings

Interesting patterns emerge from an analysis of religious preference among the adult population as a whole when compared to the choices of younger adults (18-24 years), teenagers, and college students.

The proportions of Catholics among the 18 to 24 year old group (33%) and among teenagers (38%) are higher than the proportion among older adults (25 and older).

RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE IN THE UNITED STATES 1983

	Protestant %	Catholic %	Jewish %	Eastern Orthodox %	Other %	No religious preference %
NATIONAL	56	29	2	*	4	9
AGE						
Teens 13-18 years)	50	38	3	*	3	6
18-24 years	47	33	2	1	3	14
25-29 years	51	29	2	*	5	13
30-29 years	55	29	2	1	4	9
50-64 years	61	28	2	1	2	6
65 & over	66	23	2	*	3	6

*Less than one percent.

5% Of College Students Give Preference As Jewish

The proportion of persons who give their religious preference as Jewish is twice as high among college students (5%) as among the U.S. adult population as a whole. The following table shows the latest religious preference of college students:

RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

Protestants	47%
Catholics	32
Jews	5
Eastern Orthodox	1
Other	6
None	9
	100%

PERCENTAGE OF INCOME CONTRIBUTED TO CHURCH

	10% or more %	5-9% %	Less than 5% %	None %	Don't know %
Total	16	13	33	26	12
Catholic	8	14	46	21	11
Protestant	22	14	29	22	13
Southern Baptist	37	10	31	17	5
Baptist	28	14	29	20	9
Methodist	12	15	35	23	15
Lutheran	15	18	30	20	17

Source: *from a study conducted for* Christianity Today *by the Gallup Organization Inc. and The Princeton Religion Research Center.*

PROTESTANT AND OTHER CHURCH PREFERENCE
(Based on 20 National Surveys in 1983)

BAPTIST CHURCHES	21%
Southern Baptist Convention	10
American Baptist Churches	2
The National Baptist Convention of America	1
The National Baptist Convention of U.S.A., Inc.	*
Other Baptist	3
Baptist, don't know which denomination	5
METHODIST CHURCHES	10%
United Methodist Church	8
A.M.E. Zion Church	*
A.M.E. Church	*
Other Methodist	1
Methodist, don't know which denomination	1
LUTHERAN CHURCHES	7%
American Lutheran Church	2
Lutheran Church in America	1
Missouri Synod Lutheran	2
Other Lutheran	1
Lutheran, don't know which denomination	1
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES	3%
EPISCOPAL CHURCHES	2%
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, (or CONGREGATIONALIST or EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED)	2%
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS	1
Other Protestant	3
Protestant unspecified	3
Other religion	2
TOTAL PROTESTANT:	56%

*Less than one percent.

NOTE: In reading the tables, it should be remembered that the respondents themselves designated their denominations. Therefore, Southern Baptists may be confused with Baptists who live in the South but do not belong to the Southern Baptist Convention, and it is likely that some suvey respondents in the South and West who belong to the Church of Christ identified themselves with the United Church of Christ.

RELIGIOUS PREFERENCES: MAJOR FAITHS
(Based on national sample: 1983 surveys)

	Protestants %	Catholics %	Jewish %	No religious preference %
NATIONAL	56	29	2	9
SEX				
Men	54	28	2	12
Women	59	29	2	7
RACE				
Whites	55	31	3	9
Blacks	77	7	*	12
EDUCATION				
College graduates	51	26	6	12
College incomplete	52	30	3	10
High school graduates	56	32	1	8
Less than H. S. graduates	58	26	1	11
REGION				
East	39	45	5	7
Midwest	51	26	2	14
South	59	30	*	8
West	73	14	1	8
AGE				
Under 30 years	49	31	2	13
18-24 years	47	33	2	14
25-29 years	51	29	2	13
30-49 years	55	29	2	10
50 and older	63	26	2	6
50-64 years	61	28	2	6
65 and older	67	23	2	6
INCOME				
Under $15,000	60	25	1	10
$15,000 & over	54	31	3	8
POLITICS				
Republicans	66	24	1	6
Democrats	55	31	3	8
Independents	52	29	2	12
URBANIZATION				
Center cities	46	35	3	11
Suburbs	47	36	3	9
Rural areas	70	18	*	8
MARITAL STATUS				
Married	58	29	2	10
Single	46	31	2	16
Widowed	65	25	2	4
Divorced/separated	57	25	2	12

*Less than one percent

NOTE: Percentages for the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as well as other churches, are not included in the above table because of too few cases to provide detailed breakdowns.

PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONAL PREFERENCES

(1983 data)

	Baptists %	Methodists %	Lutherans %	Presbyterians %	Episcopalians %
NATIONAL	21	10	7	3	2
SEX					
Men	19	9	6	3	2
Women	21	11	7	3	2
RACE					
Whites	16	10	7	4	2
Blacks	55	11	*	2	1
EDUCATION					
College graduates	9	10	6	7	5
College incomplete	15	9	7	4	3
High school graduates	19	10	7	3	2
Less than H.S. graduates	27	9	4	3	1
REGION					
East	9	8	4	5	3
Midwest	10	8	6	4	3
South	41	11	2	4	3
West	16	11	10	4	1
AGE					
Under 30 years	19	6	4	3	1
18-24 years	20	6	4	3	2
25-29 years	19	7	6	3	2
30-49 years	19	9	6	3	2
50 and older	21	13	7	6	3
50-64 years	20	12	7	5	3
65 and older	21	14	7	6	3
INCOME					
Under $15,000	26	11	5	3	1
$15,000 and over	15	10	7	5	3
POLITICS					
Republicans	14	13	9	6	4
Democrats	24	9	4	3	2
Independents	16	9	5	3	2
URBANIZATION					
Center cities	20	5	5	3	2
Suburbs	12	7	7	5	3
Rural areas	24	13	7	4	2
MARITAL STATUS					
Married	18	10	7	4	2
Single	19	6	4	3	2
Widowed	24	12	5	6	2
Divorced/separated	27	8	4	2	3

*Less than one percent.

PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONAL PREFERENCES IN DETAIL

(As a percent of total U.S. population)

	Total Baptist %	Southern Baptist %	American Baptist Church %	Total Methodist %	United Methodist Church %
NATIONAL	21	10	2	10	7
SEX					
Men	19	10	2	9	7
Women	21	10	3	11	8
RACE					
Whites	16	9	1	10	8
Blacks	55	19	10	11	4
EDUCATION					
College graduates	9	6	1	10	9
College incomplete	15	8	2	9	7
High school graduates	19	9	2	10	8
Less than H. S. grads	27	14	3	9	6
REGION					
East	9	2	3	8	7
Midwest	10	3	2	8	4
South	41	27	2	11	8
West	16	4	2	11	9
AGE					
Under 30 years	19	9	3	6	5
18-24 years	20	9	3	6	5
25-29 years	19	9	2	7	5
30-49 years	19	10	2	9	7
50 and older	21	10	2	13	10
50-64 years	20	10	2	12	9
65 and older	21	11	2	14	11
INCOME					
Under $15,000	26	12	3	11	7
$15,000 and over	15	8	2	10	8
POLITICS					
Republicans	14	7	2	13	11
Democrats	24	12	3	9	6
Independents	16	8	2	9	7
URBANIZATION					
Center cities	20	7	4	5	4
Suburbs	12	6	2	7	6
Rural areas	24	14	2	13	11
MARITAL STATUS					
Married	18	10	2	10	8
Single	19	8	3	6	5
Widowed	24	12	3	12	9
Divorced/separated	30	13	4	8	5

PROFILES OF PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS IN DETAIL
(continued)

	Total Lutheran %	American Lutheran Church %	Missouri Synod Lutheran %	United Church of Christ %	Christian Church %
NATIONAL	100	100	100	100	100
SEX					
Men	47	44	48	41	44
Women	53	56	52	59	56
EDUCATION					
College graduates	15	18	14	25	12
College incomplete	15	16	16	12	15
High school graduates	46	43	45	34	41
Less than H. S. grads	24	23	25	29	32
RACE					
Whites	99	91	100	94	92
Non-whites	1	1	*	6	8
Blacks	1	1	*	5	7
AGE					
Total under 30 years	22	18	20	17	32
18-24 years	13	13	11	10	18
25-29 years	9	5	9	7	14
30-49 years	33	36	37	32	28
Total 50 and older	45	46	43	51	40
50-64 years	26	28	25	25	17
65 and older	19	18	18	26	23
INCOME					
Under $15,000	33	32	31	39	46
$15,000 and over	67	68	69	61	54
REGION					
East	19	12	10	25	6
West	54	57	70	40	34
South	8	8	6	22	27
Midwest	19	23	14	13	33
POLITICS					
Republicans	36	40	36	38	28
Democrats	34	33	29	35	43
Independents	30	27	35	27	29
MARITAL STATUS					
Married	72	70	78	69	62
Single	15	16	11	13	20
Widowed	8	8	8	13	11
Divorced/separated	5	6	3	5	7
URBANIZATION					
Center cities	22	23	17	23	25
Suburbs	28	30	26	26	27
Rural areas	50	47	57	51	48

*Less than one percent.

PROFILES OF MAJOR RELIGIOUS FAITHS IN THE UNITED STATES

(Based on total national sample)

	Protestant %	Catholic %	Jewish %	Other %	None %
NATIONAL	100	100	100	100	100
SEX					
Men	46	47	51	50	63
Women	54	53	49	50	37
EDUCATION					
College graduates	14	16	43	18	21
College incomplete	14	18	23	18	17
High school graduates	40	51	26	38	35
Less than high school graduates	32	15	8	26	27
RACE					
Whites	83	92	99	83	81
Non-whites	17	8	1	17	19
Blacks	16	3	1	11	16
AGE					
Total under 30 years	24	31	25	32	41
18-24 years	14	20	15	19	26
25-29 years	10	11	10	13	15
30-49 years	34	35	36	38	36
Total 50 and older	42	34	39	30	23
50-64 years	23	21	21	17	13
65 and older	19	13	81	13	10
INCOME					
Under $15,000	56	35	20	43	45
$15,000 and over	44	65	80	57	55
REGION					
East	19	42	57	21	22
West	28	14	17	18	25
South	37	28	4	24	24
Midwest	16	16	22	37	29
POLITICS					
Republicans	29	21	11	26	17
Democrats	43	48	61	35	42
Independents	28	31	28	39	41
MARITAL STATUS					
Married	66	64	63	62	50
Single	17	23	24	24	37
Widowed	10	7	7	8	4
Divorced/separated	7	6	6	6	9
URBANIZATION					
Center cities	26	39	48	33	39
Suburbs	23	35	40	31	27
Rural areas	51	26	12	36	34

PROFILES OF MAJOR PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

(Based on national sample of Protestants)

	Total Protestants %	Baptists %	Presby-terians %	Lutherans %	Methodists %	Episco-palians %
NATIONAL	100	100	100	100	100	100
SEX						
Men	46	45	46	47	44	46
Women	54	55	54	53	56	54
EDUCATION						
College graduates	14	8	27	15	17	38
College incomplete	14	11	18	15	14	21
High school graduates	40	39	38	46	44	29
Less than H.S. graduates	32	42	17	24	25	12
RACE						
Whites	83	66	95	9	88	94
Non-whites	17	34	5	1	12	6
Blacks	16	34	4	1	12	5
AGE						
Total under 30 years	24	28	21	22	18	21
18-24 years	14	17	12	13	11	12
25-29 years	10	11	9	9	7	9
30-49 years	34	33	30	33	33	33
Total 50 and older	42	39	49	45	49	46
50-64 years	23	22	25	26	25	25
65 and older	19	17	24	19	24	21
INCOME						
Under $15,000	56	54	30	33	41	27
$15,000 and over	44	46	70	67	59	73
REGION						
East	19	12	29	19	23	35
West	28	20	24	54	31	13
South	37	59	26	8	33	31
Midwest	16	9	21	19	13	21
POLITICS						
Republicans	29	18	40	36	34	41
Democrats	43	57	32	34	39	31
Independents	28	25	28	30	27	28
MARITAL STATUS						
Married	66	61	69	72	70	61
Single	17	19	16	15	13	22
Widowed	10	11	11	8	11	9
Divorced/separated	7	9	4	5	6	8
URBANIZATION						
Center cities	26	32	24	22	20	30
Suburbs	23	17	34	28	21	38
Rural areas	51	51	42	50	59	32

PROFILES OF PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS IN DETAIL

(Based on national sample of Protestants)

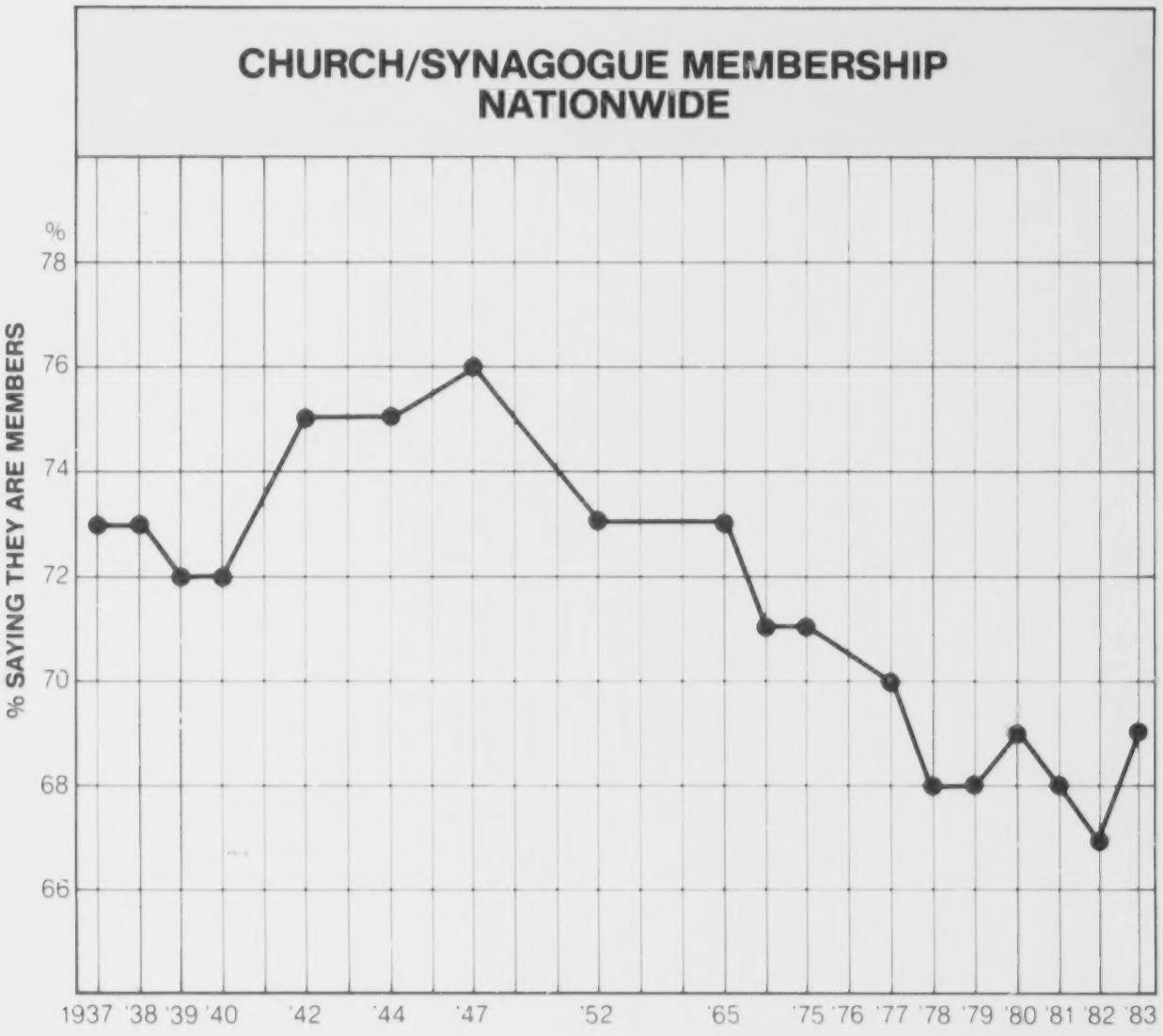
	Total Baptist %	Southern Baptist %	American Baptist %	Total Methodist %	United Methodist %
NATIONAL	100	100	100	100	100
SEX					
Men	45	47	43	44	44
Women	55	53	57	56	56
EDUCATION					
College graduates	8	10	7	17	18
College incomplete	11	12	11	14	15
High school graduates	39	37	40	44	45
Less than H. S. graduates	42	41	42	25	22
RACE					
Whites	66	76	47	88	94
Non-whites	34	24	53	12	6
Blacks	34	24	53	12	6
AGE					
Total under 30 years	28	26	311	18	18
18-24 years	17	16	20	11	11
25-29 years	11	10	11	7	7
30-49 years	33	34	33	33	33
Total 50 and older	39	40	36	49	49
50-64 years	22	21	21	25	25
65 and older	17	19	15	24	24
INCOME					
Under $15,000	54	50	60	41	39
$15,000 and over	46	50	40	59	61
REGION					
East	12	14	37	23	25
West	20	11	28	31	34
South	59	79	23	33	30
Midwest	9	6	12	13	11
POLITICS					
Republicans	18	19	17	34	37
Democrats	57	55	59	39	35
Independents	25	26	24	27	28
MARITAL STATUS					
Married	61	63	54	70	72
Single	19	17	25	13	13
Widowed	11	11	11	11	10
Divorced/separated	9	9	10	6	5
URBANIZATION					
Center cities	32	24	51	20	17
Suburbs	17	17	18	21	21
Rural areas	51	59	31	59	62

PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONAL PREFERENCES IN DETAIL
(continued)

	Total Lutheran %	American Lutheran Church %	Missouri Synod Lutheran %	United Church of Christ %	Christian Church %
NATIONAL	7	2	2	2	2
SEX					
Men	6	1	2	2	2
Women	7	2	2	2	2
RACE					
Whites	7	2	2	2	2
Blacks	*	*	*	1	1
EDUCATION					
College graduates	6	2	2	3	2
College incomplete	7	2	2	1	2
High school graduates	7	2	2	2	2
Less than H. S. grads.	4	2	1	2	2
AGE					
Under 30 years	4	1	1	1	2
18-24 years	4	1	1	1	2
25-29 years	6	1	2	1	2
30-49 years	6	2	2	2	2
50 and older	7	2	2	2	2
50-64 years	7	2	2	2	2
65 and older	7	2	2	3	3
INCOME					
Under $15,000	5	1	1	2	2
$15,000 & over	7	2	2	2	2
REGION					
East	4	1	1	2	1
Midwest	6	2	1	1	3
South	2	1	1	1	2
West	11	3	2	3	2
POLITICS					
Republicans	9	3	3	3	2
Democrats	4	1	1	1	2
Independents	5	2	2	2	2
URBANIZATION					
Center Cities	5	1	1	1	1
Suburbs	7	2	2	2	2
Rural areas	7	2	2	2	2
MARITAL STATUS					
Married	7	2	2	2	2
Single	4	1	1	1	2
Widowed	5	2	2	3	2
Divorced/separated	4	1	1	1	2

*Less than one percent.

D. Religious Participation


CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP
NATIONWIDE
% SAYING THEY ARE MEMBERS
%
78
76
74
72
70
68
66
1937 '38 '39 '40 '42 '44 '47 '52 '65 '75 '76 '77 '78 '79 '80 '81 '82 '83

7 In 10 Americans Claim Membership

Seven in 10 U.S. adults say they are members of a church or synagogue.

The proportion of adult church or synagogue members declined in the three-decade period between 1947 and 1978. Over the last five years, however, the percentage has levelled out.

It is important to bear in mind that the membership figures reported here are *self-classifications*, representing the proportion of people who say they are members of a church or synagogue, and thus may include some who are not actually on the rolls of a local church. It should also be stressed that adherents of certain churches - for example, the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches - are considered members at birth.

Results Based On Five Surveys

The 1983 membership figure is based on an average of five surveys conducted in selected weeks during the year. More than 7,500 adults, 18 and older, were personally interviewed in 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation.

The following question was asked:

"Do you happen to be a member of a church or synagogue?"

Here is the national trend:

CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP

(% saying they are members)

1983	69%
1982	68
1981	68
1980	69
1979	68
1978	68
1977	70
1976	71
1975	71
1965	73
1952	73
1947	76
1944	75
1942	75
1940	72
1939	72
1938	73
1937	73

Analysis of church membership in 1983 by region and key population groups shows membership to be highest in the Midwest (74%) and the South (72%) and lowest in the West (58%).

Here are other highlights from this analysis:

* The level of church membership is highest among persons with only a grade school background (73%), followed by those with a college background (70%), and persons whose formal education ended with high school (70%).

* The level of church membership increases with age, with 61% of persons 18 to 24 years old saying they belong to a church compared to 81% among persons 65 and older.

* A higher percentage of Catholics are members (80%) than Protestants (73%). A total of 45% of Jews say they are members of a synagogue.

* Among major Protestant denominations, Southern Baptists have the highest percentage of members; 79% of persons who give their religious preference as Southern Baptist say they belong to a church. Next are Lutherans

(78%), followed by Methodists (76%), Episcopalians (71%) and Presbyterians (71%).

* One of the highest levels of church or synagogue membership is found among persons who are widowed (83%).

The following table shows the 1983 church membership figures in detail:

CHURCH-SYNAGOGUE MEMBERSHIP

NATIONAL	69%
Men	64
Women	74
Whites	69
Blacks	76
College graduates	68
College incomplete	70
High school graduates	70
Less than H. S. graduates	64
Total under 30 years	60
18-24 years	61
25-29 years	58
30-49 years	68
50 and older	78
50-64 years	75
65 and older	81
East	69
Midwest	74
South	72
West	58
Republicans	76
Democrats	71
Independents	63
$15,000 income and over	69
Under $15,000 income	69
Protestants	73
Catholics	80
Jews	45
Denominations	
Southern Baptists	79
Lutherans	78
Methodists	76
Presbyterians	71
Episcopalians	71
Married	72
Single	58
Widowed	83
Currently divorced/separated	60
Residents of center cities	67
Suburbs	67
Rural areas	73

Trend Among Major Faiths

The following table shows the trend for Protestants and Catholics:

	National %	Protestants %	Catholics %
1983	69	73	80
1981	68	73	79
1980	69	72	80
1979	68	73	78
1976	71	71	80
1975	71	73	83
1965	73	75	90
1952	73	75	87

The following table shows the age distribution of non-members:

Non-Members of Church/Synagogue - By Age -

Under 30 years	40%
18-24	39
25-29	42
30-49 years	32
50 and older	22
50-64 years	25
65 and older	19

Churchgoing Remarkably Constant Since 1969

Four adults in every 10 (40%) attended church or synagogue in a typical week in 1983, matching the figure recorded for 1982.

Churchgoing has remained remarkably constant since 1969, after having declined from the high points of 49% recorded in 1955 and 1958. Attendance has not varied by more than two percentage points since 1969.

The rate of churchgoing is higher among women than men, and among older persons than younger. Attendance is highest in the East, where the greatest proportion of Catholics is found, and is lowest in the West.

In 1983, 51% of Catholics nationwide attended Mass in a typical week, compared to 39% of Protestants, figures that closely approximate those from the 1982 audit.

Since 1958, a peak year for church attendance, the decline in churchgoing has been sharpest among Catholics. Attendance at Mass has fallen 23 points since 1958, while Protestant churchgoing has remained remarkably stable during the same time period.

To estimate the average attendance during 1983, surveys of representative samples of the adult population were made in five selected weeks during the year.

This question was asked:

"Did you, yourself, happen to attend church or synagogue in the last seven days?"

Following is the full trend since 1939. The audits from 1955 to 1983 were based on an average of the combined results of several surveys during each year. The figures prior to 1955 were based on a single annual survey:

CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE

1983	40%
1982	40
1981	41
1980	40
1979	40
1978	41
1977	41
1976	42
1975	40
1974	40
1973	40
1972	40
1971	40
1970	42
1969	42
1968	43
1967	43
1966	44
1965	44
1964	45
1963	46
1962	46
1961	47
1960	47
1959	47
1958	49*
1957	47
1956	46
1955	49*
1954	46
1950	39
1940	37**
1939	41

* High points
**Low Point

Analysis of church attendance during 1983 by key population groups shows the following:

* Persons with a college background -- and particularly those who have completed their col-

lege education -- go to church more often than do persons with less formal education.

* The rate of church attendance increases with age, with 29% of persons 18 to 24 years old attending in a typical week of 1983 compared to half (51%) of persons 65 and older.

* Catholics are better attenders than are Protestants and both groups attend religious services far more often than do Jews.

* One of the highest church attendance rates is recorded for persons who are widowed (49%).

The following table shows the results in detail:

CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE

(Percent attending in average week of 1983)

NATIONAL	40%
Men	37
Women	43
Whites	40
Blacks	42
College graduate	44
College incomplete	39
High school	39
Grade school	42
Total under 30 years	30
18-24 years	29
25-29 years	31
30-49 years	39
50 and older	48
50-64 years	45
65 and older	51
East	37
Midwest	35
South	42
West	43
Republicans	47
Democrats	40
Independents	36
Under $15,000 income	40
$15,000 income and over	40
Protestants	39
Catholics	52
Jews	32
Married	43
Single	29
Widowed	49
Currently divorced/separated	30
Resident in central cities	39
Suburbs	38
Rural	42

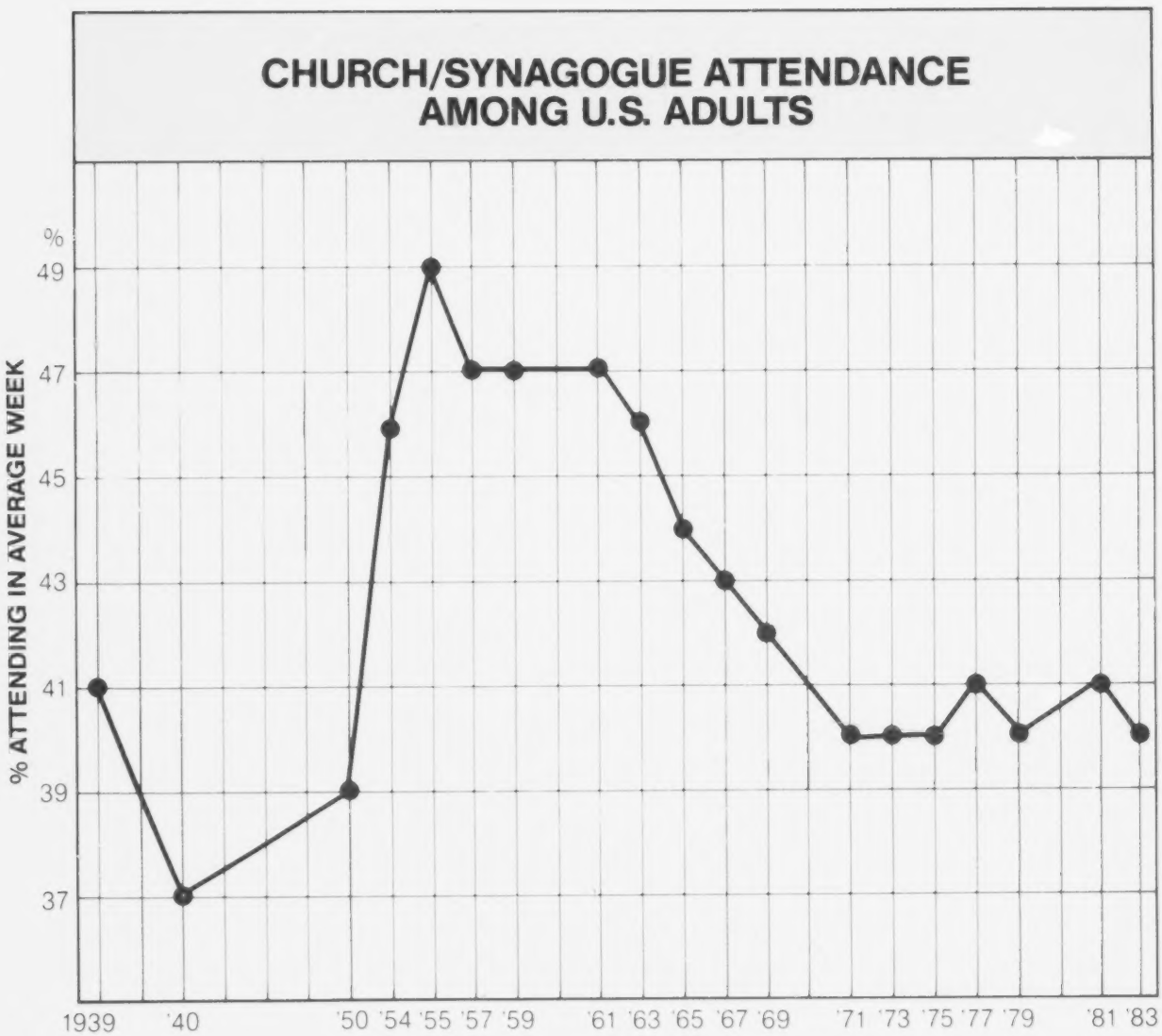
By Protestants/Catholics

Since 1958 -- a peak year for church attendance -- the decline in churchgoing has been sharpest among Catholics. Attendance at Mass fell 22 points -- from 74% to 52% -- between 1958 and 1978, and currently stands at 52%. Since 1973, Catholic churchgoing has remained fairly stable.

The following table shows highlights in the trend for Catholics and Protestants since the peak year of 1958:

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

	Protestants %	Catholics %
1983	39	52
1982	41	51
1981	40	53
1980	39	53
1979	40	52
1978	40	52
1968	38	65
1958	44	74


CHURCH/SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE
AMONG U.S. ADULTS
% ATTENDING IN AVERAGE WEEK
%
49
47
45
43
41
39
37
1939
'40
'50
'54
'55
'57
'59
'61
'63
'65
'67
'69
'71
'73
'75
'77
'79
'81
'83

Sharp Differences By Age Groups

Sharp differences in church or synagogue attendance are found by age, with 30% of adults under 30 attending in a typical week in 1983, compared to 39% among persons 30 to 49 years old and 48% among those 50 and older.

In 1958, the proportions of attenders in each age group were similar, with about as many younger as older persons attending church or synagogue.

Churchgoing among adults under 30 is 18 percentage points lower today than it was in 1958, while it has declined by 12 points among 30-49-year-olds and has remained the same among those 50 and older.

The following table shows the highlights in the trend:

CHURCH OR SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE

	National %	18-29 %	30-49 %	50 and older %
1983.....	40	30	39	48
1982.....	41	32	41	47
1981.....	41	32	42	47
1980.....	40	31	40	47
1977.....	41	29	42	48
1967.....	43	40	46	47
1958.....	49	48	51	48

Catholics, Baptists Are Best Attenders

Catholics and Baptists are the most frequent churchgoers, as determined by annual Gallup surveys of church or synagogue attendance in the United States.

In a typical week of 1983, 52% of Catholics attended church at least once. The comparable figure for Baptists is 41% (based on an average of five surveys taken in 1983).

Next highest in frequency of attendance are persons affiliated with Methodist churches (37%), followed by Lutherans (35%), Episcopalians (30%) and Presbyterians (28%).

The following table shows the trend:

CHURCHGOING BY MAJOR GROUPINGS OF U. S. PROTESTANT CHURCHES

	1983 %	1978-1981 %	1975-1977 %	1968-1970 %	1965-1967 %
Total Protestant	39	40	39	38	38
Baptists.....	41	40	39	38	38
Methodists	37	35	33	36	34
Lutherans	35	42	36	37	41
Episcopalians	30	31	31	31	33
Presbyterians	28	33	33	35	37

INTERESTED IN CONDUCTING A SURVEY OF YOUR CHURCH?

A growing number of priests, ministers and rabbis have expressed interest in conducting surveys of their congregations and/or local communities.

If you share this interest and would like expert help and advice, we suggest you contact Russell D. Bredholt, Continental Research Associates, 1153 Winged Foot Circle, Winter Springs, Florida 32708. Telephone: (305) 365-4321. Continental Research Associates is affiliated with the Princeton Religion Research Center.

III.

THE RELIGIOUS WORLD OF AMERICAN TEENAGERS

Jesus Christ is Fifth on Teens' List of "Greatest Persons in History"

Jesus Christ is fifth on the list of persons in history most admired by U.S. teenagers today. He follows Abraham Lincoln (the top choice), George Washington, John Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

The fact that Jesus Christ is not at the top of the list or nearer the top, is probably due in considerable measure to the fact that some survey respondents (who were not given a list) may not think of Jesus Christ in an historical context.

The following table gives the top 10 places on the list, based on responses to these questions:

What one person that you have heard or read about at any time in history do you think was the greatest person in history? And who would be your second choice?

GREATEST PERSON IN HISTORY

(First two choices of all teenagers)

1. Abraham Lincoln
2. George Washington
3. John Kennedy
4. Martin Luther King, Jr.
5. Jesus Christ
6. Albert Einstein
7. Benjamin Franklin
8. Thomas Jefferson
9. Franklin Roosevelt
10. Elvis Presley

The findings are from a recent Gallup Youth Survey, based on telephone interviews with a representative national cross-section of 506 youths, ages 13 through 18, conducted in December, 1982.

Surveys Explore Teenagers' Religious Beliefs, Training, And Knowledge

The shape of religion in America in the years ahead will be determined in considerable measure by the developing religious beliefs and practices of the nation's 25 million teenagers.

This section examines in detail the religious world of America's teenagers, based on Gallup/ Associated Press Youth Surveys conducted during the seven-year period, 1977-1983.

The areas examined are religious preference, the importance of religion in the lives of teens, religious beliefs, practices and experience, religious training, knowledge and views on religion and society.

The findings are based on twice or more yearly surveys of 1,000 or more teenagers, 13-18, interviewed by telephone.

To set the context for the survey results on religion, here are some overall findings about the teenage population today and the changes that have come about over the last seven years:

Over this period of time the opinions of America's teenagers have moved rapidly away from the last vestiges of the narcissistic youth culture of the 1960's toward the high technology of the 1980's.

Teenagers, for example, are taking a harder line each year against marijuana. Many still may experiment with it, but opposition to legalization or decriminalization of marijuana possession has been mounting steadily.

At the same time, however, peer pressure upon teenagers to smoke cigarettes or use alcoholic beverages has not abated. Perhaps as a result, teens endorse the recent move by many states to raise the legal drinking age beyond 18.

On the music scene, "acid rock," which was often associated with the drug culture, has been replaced by "heavy metal rock" as a teen favorite, and rock music in its various forms remains the favorite of the average teen.

Despite their declining numbers in the overall population, teens still represent a major market for the entertainment industry. They attend movies more frequently than any other group, and continue to a spend large amount of money on tapes and records.

Recent generations of teenagers have been mesmerized by television, and the current generation is no different, according to the proportion who watch television regularly. But a new factor has come into play as teens no longer simply watch the tube but manipulate it through playing their favorite video games.

Seven years ago, when the Gallup Youth Survey conducted its first interviews, video games were only beginning to appear in the marketplace. Today, it is almost impossible to find a teenager, male or female, who has not played video games.

Want Career In Computers

Beyond fun and games, however, the video games have already instantly alerted an entire young generation to the potential power of the

computer in their lives. Within the past three years the Gallup Youth Survey has witnessed the advance of a career in computers from the 10th most popular choice of teenagers in 1980, to fourth most popular in 1981, and finally, to first in 1982.

By contrast, auto mechanics, which historically has been a popular choice of young men, has dropped from second place in 1980 to 15th in 1982.

About seven in 10 teenagers hope to receive college training to help prepare themselves for the job market. Unfortunately, about one young person in four feels he may not be able to afford the college of his choice.

High school students are taking computer courses when available, and about seven in 10 hope to receive new or additional instruction in computer at the college level. Incredibly, over four in 10 college-bound teenagers aspire to make computer science or a related field their major field of study.

The way in which the nation's colleges and universities will deal with this rising demand for computer science instruction may become a major chapter in the history of higher education in America. In turn, an entire young generation, savvy in the ways of the computer, may very well rewrite the economic and social history of the United States as we approach the 21st century.

Those who worry that young people are watching television, listening to the radio or recordings, or using video games and computers instead of reading, should be pleased to know that teenagers report high levels of newspaper and magazine readership. When it comes to books, the current generation shows a preference for modern fiction, and one teenager in three reads the Bible at least weekly.

Teens Are More Confident Today

The young men and women of today approach the future with greater confidence in America than was shown by their older brothers and sisters, who had been dismayed by the aftermath of Watergate and the national trauma of the Iranian hostage crisis. A majority of the young adults now are quite willing to give a year of their lives in military or non-military service to their country.

In fact, today's teenagers would like to have more responsibility in general. They know they are preparing for adulthood and take this responsibility seriously. Most hope to be married, to have about two children, and to work hard to make their marriages succeed.

Although about one in five has personally been affected by the divorce or separation of their parents, most teenagers feel that current divorce laws are too lax and that the estranged partners have not worked hard enough to save their marriages.

Most teenagers indicate a desire for marriage someday. The proportion of young people who plan to remain single remains constant at 9% but those who are not certain about marriage has risen in 1983 to 9%.

Little difference in marriage intentions is noted according to demographic characteristics, but teens living in the South show comparatively less interest in being married someday (77%), and more interest in remaining single (15%), than was found in other sections of the country.

It is important to note that those same teens who plan marriage also plan on having small families, a trend that portends a slower population growth in the United States during the next decade.

According to the survey, over half (55%) of those who plan to be married hope to have two children, while an additional 25% say they would like to have three children.

At the extremes, 8% say they would like only one child or none, compared to 4% who gave a similar response in 1981. Four or more children was the goal of 9%, down from 14% in 1981.

Greatest interest in larger families is expressed by teenagers in the eastern states, with nearly half (48%) saying they would like three or more children. Least interest was found in the South, where only 18% would like to have more than two children.

Catholic teenagers also express greater interest in larger families, with 40% saying they would like three or more children, compared to 29% of Protestant teenagers who say they want larger families.

Eight in 10 teenagers (82%) believe they will get married some day. By comparison, 87% in 1981 and 84% in 1977 expressed a similar intention.

Key Findings On Religious Scene

Turning now to the religious scene:

We are noting in our very latest surveys a rising tide of interest in religious and spiritual matters. Teens are clearly searching for spiritual moorings in their lives with a new intensity. This search is taking the form of a growth in Bible study groups among both teens and adults.

Despite the growing interest among teens in religious and spiritual matters, many teenagers remain "turned off" by churches and organized religion. They, are nevertheless, highly religious in certain key respects.

Evidence that the churches are failing to play a central role in the religious lives of many youths is seen in these survey findings:

* Only one-fourth express a high degree of confidence in organized religion, far lower than the figure recorded for the adult population.

* Overwhelming proportions of teenage Catholics (82%) and Protestants (74%) believe that a person can be a good Christian (or Jew) if he or she doesn't go to church.

Despite this survey evidence, it is hard to escape the conclusion that this age group is remarkably religious, as determined by further findings:

* An extremely high proportion, 95%, say they believe in God.

* Teenagers appear to be more likely than their elders to feel a close relationship with God, with a higher proportion saying they believe in a "personal" God.

* Eight in 10 say religion plays either a "very important" or a "fairly important" role in their lives, with the figure increasing to five in 10 among older teenage girls.

* Only 6% of teenagers say they have no religious preference or affiliation.

* Seven in 10 teenagers say they are church members.

* Church attendance among teenagers is as high as it is among older persons, although parental pressure to attend could be a factor.

* The idea of going on religious "retreats" appeals to a surprising number of teenagers -- to 46% of boys and 57% of girls.

* Despite declining enrollment in the seminaries of certain faiths and denominations, 5% of both teenage boys and girls express at least some interest in the religious life.

Teen Years: A Period Of Skepticism?

Although the teenage years -- and particularly the late teens -- are often regarded as a period of religious doubt and skepticism, little evidence of this is found in these Gallup Youth Surveys.

1. As indicated, an extraordinarily high proportion of teenagers (95%) say they believe in God or a universal spirit -- a proportion which closely parallels that for the adult (18 and over) population as a whole.

In addition, three out of four teenagers (75%) believe in a "personal" God -- that is, a God who observes one's actions and rewards or punishes. Younger teens, 13 to 15 years old, are more likely to believe in a personal God than are 16 to 18 year-olds.

2. Nearly nine in 10 teenagers (87%) say they pray, with four in 10 (39%) saying they pray "frequently." Only 13% say they never pray. Girls are more likely to pray -- and to pray frequently -- than are boys.

Gap Between Experience And Commitment Noted

While belief levels among teenagers remain high, a pronounced gap is found between religious belief and commitment. A remarkable seven in 10 teenagers (68%) say they have had the feeling that they have been in the presence of God. Yet despite these profound experiences -- or peak moments -- in the spiritual lives of teenagers, only about one teen in five (22%) says that his or her religious beliefs are "the most important" influence in their lives.

At the same time, however, another 49% of those surveyed say their religious beliefs are "one of the most important" influences in their lives. About one-fourth of teenagers say their religious beliefs are "one of the least important" or "the

least important" influence in their lives.

Factors which could help explain what some readers will regard as a disturbing gap between religious beliefs and experience and religious commitment include a lack of a fully developed prayer life, an ignorance of Scripture, and the inability to develop the discipline necessary to support a commitment consistent with religious experience and belief.

Many Are Involved In Religious Movements

Many American teenagers continue to be involved in new religious trends or movements, and to a greater extent than their elders.

These findings have important implications for the churches and synagogues of America and suggest that many young people, including regular attenders of churches and synagogues as well as nonattenders, are not finding the spiritual dimensions they seek in their traditional religious up-bringing.

The survey was designed to test interest and involvement in six religious movements or trends -- yoga, Transcendental Meditation (TM) and Eastern religions, Bible study groups, inner or spiritual healing and the charismatic movement.

In virtually each case, the percentage of teenagers involved is higher than the proportion of adults involved.

Four in 10 teenagers are involved in Bible study groups, 6% in yoga, 6% in inner or spiritual healing, 4% in Transcendental Meditation, 3% in Eastern religions and 2% in the charismatic movement. In addition, about 1% of teens are involved in Hare Krishna.

In What Ways Is Church Failing?

The evidence cited earlier indicates that the traditional church is failing to play a central role in the religious lives of many young persons.

Specifically, in what ways do teenagers feel religion or the church is failing to do the job it should? Their reasons, which merit close examination, fall into four major categories: (1) churches are not reaching out to the people they should be serving; (2) negative attitudes toward churchgoers and church members; (3) churches are failing to deal with the basics of faith and are not appealing to youth on a deeper spiritual level; and (4) there is little feeling of excitement or warmth in churches.

Following are other key findings about the spiritual and religious world of teenagers:

Religious Preference

One-half of teenagers today (50%) give their religious preference as Protestant, 38% as Catholic, 3% Jewish, 3% give other responses while 6% say they have no religious preference. These findings closely parallel those recorded in regular surveys over the last seven years.

The proportion of teenage Catholics is higher than for older persons, as seen in the following table:

RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

	Protestant %	Catholic %	Jewish %
NATIONAL	57	29	2
AGE			
Teens (13-18 years)	50	38	2
18-24 years	48	33	2
25-29 years	50	29	2
30-49 years	56	29	2
50-64 years	62	28	2
65 & over	67	24	2

(Note: Figures for Eastern Orthodox, other religions and no preference have been omitted from the above table.)

One Teen In Five Is An Evangelical

One teenager in five (19%) fits one definition of an evangelical -- that is, one who has had a "born-again" experience, has tried to encourage someone to accept Jesus Christ as his or her Savior and holds a literal view of the Bible or believes the Bible is not mistaken in its statements and teachings. This proportion is about the same as for the adult population (18 and older).

Following is a profile of teenage evangelicals:

PROFILE OF TEENAGED EVANGELICALS

National	19%
Boys	16
Girls	22
Whites	18
Non-whites	22
Protestants	25
Catholics	7

Four In 10 Teenagers Say Religion 'Very Important'

Four in 10 (40%) of teens say their religious beliefs are "very important" in their lives, while 41% say "fairly," 12% "not too," and 6% not at all." These proportions have remained fairly constant since 1977.

Following are the results by key groups of those saying "very":

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS 'VERY IMPORTANT'

National	40%
Boys	39
Girls	42
Whites	36
Non-whites	65
Protestants	47
Catholics	37
Regular churchgoers	57
Non-regular	27

One In Five Says Beliefs Are 'Most Important' Influence

One teen in five (22%) says his or her beliefs are the "most important" influence in their lives, while 49% say "one of the most," 20% "one of the least," and 7% "the least."

Again, the current findings closely parallel the results of earlier surveys.

The following table shows the percentages by groups of those saying their religious beliefs are the "most important" influence in their lives:

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS 'MOST IMPORTANT' INFLUENCE

National	22%
Boys	23
Girls	21
Whites	20
Non-whites	36
Protestants	28
Catholics	13
Regular churchgoers	31
Non-regular	14

Qualities Teenagers Consider Important

About half of teenagers (52%) say that religious faith is an important one for a person their age to learn, a smaller proportion than name seven other qualities.

More than nine in every 10 teenagers, 93% applaud responsibility as a very important personal quality, while 90% feel that self-respect and honesty are commendable. Other personal qualities, listed in descending order of their importance to teenagers, are: hard work (77%), patience (73%), obedience (70%), independence (68%) and religious faith (52%).

A sense of responsibility is considered to be of utmost importance by youngsters from all demographic groups. However, teen opinion is not quite so uniform on other issues.

For example, girls tend to be more upbeat than boys about the importance of the various values, and they are particularly concerned about honesty, self-respect, patience and independence.

The perceived importance of these personal qualities generally increases with age. Older teens (16 to 18 years old) give higher or equal rating to all the qualities measured except religious faith, the importance of which substantially decreases with age.

Black teenagers attach more importance than do whites to most of the values tested. The gap between the roles is especially wide in the areas of obedience, independence and religious faith.

Also, Protestant youngsters tend to out vote their Catholic counterparts on the relative importance of personal qualities. The difference in opinion is largest for those qualities that make up the Protestant work ethic: hard work, obedience and religious faith, with proportionately more Protestants than Catholics citing these values as very important.

Regionally, teens who hail from the South attach more importance to honesty, hard work, patience, obedience and especially religious faith than do their peers from other parts of the country.

Following is the question asked:

"For the following personal qualities -- hard work, honesty, obedience, self-respect, responsibility, independence, patience, religious faith -- how important do you feel each one is for a person your age to learn: very important, fairly important, or not so important?"

While about half of teens do not consider religious faith a very important trait for a person their age to have, three in 10 (31%) say they favor more discussion of religion with their parents. A total of 17% say less while another 51% favor the present level of discussion.

Most likely to want increased discussion are older girls (16 to 18) and blacks.

Basic Beliefs: God

An extraordinarily high proportion of teenagers (95%), as noted earlier, say they believe in God or a universal spirit, a proportion which closely parallels that for the adult (18 and over) population as a whole.

In addition, three out of four teenagers (75%) believe in a "personal" God -- that is, a God who observes one's actions and rewards or punishes.

These questions were asked:

"Do you believe in God or a universal spirit?" (Those who said "yes" were also asked the following question: "Do you believe that this God or universal spirit observes your actions and rewards or punishes you for them?")

Here are the results by groups (and a comparison with older persons):

BELIEF IN GOD

	Believe %	Don't believe %	Don't know %
NATIONAL	95	3	2
Boys	94	4	2
Girls	96	2	2
Both Sexes			
13-15 years	95	3	2
16-18 years	95	3	2
Adults			
18-29 years	92	5	3
30 & over	95	3	2

BELIEF IN PERSONAL GOD

	God observes %	Doesn't observe %	Don't know %
NATIONAL	75	15	5
Boys	74	17	3
Girls	77	13	6
Both sexes			
13-15 years	80	10	5
16-18 years	71	19	5
Adults			
18-29 years	67	19	6
30 & older	70	18	7

Reasons For Belief In God

The reasons behind teens' belief in a Supreme Being can be broadly classified into four basic categories: authoritative, empirical, rational and utilitarian.

Statements classified under the heading "authoritative" (accounting for 41% of the total

responses to the question: "What are your main reasons for believing in God or a universal spirit?") attribute belief in the existence of God to some form of authority -- the Bible (or some aspect of the Bible: i.e., miracles, the life of Jesus), to upbringing or religious training in the home, church or school.

Teenagers who give reasons of the "rational" type (24%) cite one or more of the following as constituting the existence of God: the wonders of nature, the order and laws of the universe and the miracle of the human body.

Reasons classified under the category of "empirical" (13%) usually relate to the life or experience of the person. Most of the reasons deal with deliverance from serious illness, and often, in the respondent's mind, from death itself. Answers in terms of help through prayer are common.

"Utilitarian" responses (5%) are oriented toward the practical or pragmatic. Basically, teenagers who hold to this point of view believe in God because they need something to look forward to after death.

Basic Beliefs:
Life After Death

Six in 10 teens (58%) say they believe in life after death. Differences by groups are not great, as seen in the following table:

BELIEVE IN LIFE AFTER DEATH?
(Percent saying 'yes')

NATIONAL	58%
Boys	59
Girls	58
13-15 years old	55
16-18 years old	61
Protestants	61
Catholics	59

Basic Beliefs:
Reincarnation

A remarkably high percentage of teens (27%) believe in reincarnation. By way of comparison the figure for adults (18 and older) is 23%.

The belief in reincarnation (or the transmigration of souls) has been held rather widely throughout the world, both among primitives and peoples of higher cultural development. According to *Man's Religions* (by John B. Noss, The Macmillan Company, 1949), reincarnation in its Indo-Aryan form runs like this:

> The soul of man who dies does not, except in the single case of one who at death returns into indistinguishable oneness with Brahma, pass into a permanent state of being in heaven or hell or elsewhere; the soul, rather, is reborn into another existence which will terminate in due time and necessitate yet another birth. Rebirth follows rebirth with the one exception named, in an endless chain.

Here are the survey results by key groups:

BELIEVE IN REINCARNATION?
(Percent saying 'yes')

National (teens)	27%
Boys	24
Girls	30
13-15 years old	28
16-18 years old	26
Protestants	25
Catholics	29

Basic Practices: Prayer

Nearly nine in 10 teenagers (87%) say they pray, with four in 10 (39%) saying they pray "frequently." Only 13% say they never pray. Girls are more likely to pray -- and to pray frequently -- than are boys.

About half of teenagers surveyed (52%) report they say grace or give thanks to God aloud before meals.

These questions were asked about prayer:

"Do you ever pray?" (Those answering "yes" were then asked: "About how often -- frequently, occasionally, or seldom?")

This question was also asked:

"At family meals at home, does anyone say grace or give thanks to God aloud before meals?"

Here are the national findings by age and sex:

PRAYER

	Yes, pray %	Don't pray %
National	87	13
Boys	82	18
13-15 yrs.	82	18
16-18 yrs.	81	19
Girls	92	8
13-15 yrs.	90	10
16-18 yrs.	92	8

HOW OFTEN?

	Frequently %	Occasionally %	Seldom %
National	37	36	12
Boys	27	39	16
13-15 yrs.	29	40	13
16-18 yrs.	26	37	18
Girls	49	34	9
13-15 yrs.	45	35	10
16-18 yrs.	52	32	8

GRACE BEFORE MEALS

	Yes %	No %
National	52	48
Boys	50	50
13-15 yrs.	51	49
16-18 yrs.	50	50
Girls	53	47
13-15 yrs.	52	48
16-18 yrs.	54	46

Half Of Teens Like Idea Of 'Retreats'

A total of 52% of teens say they like the idea of going on a "retreat." The figure is 58% among

older female teenagers. The question and results:

"Some churches conduct what is known as 'retreats' -- that is, a person may go to a quiet place with a small group and stay for two or three days to think about one's life and one's religion. Does this idea appeal to you, or not?"

INTEREST IN 'RETREATS'

	Yes %	No %	Don't know %
National	52	41	7
Boys	46	45	9
13-15 years	43	47	10
16-18 years	48	44	8
Girls	57	38	5
13-15 years	56	39	5
16-18 years	58	38	4

Basic Practices: Bible Reading

A Gallup Youth Survey reveals that only about one teenager in eight (12%) reads the Bible daily, and 30% never open the book or can't remember when they last did so.

Nearly one-fourth of teens (24%) read the Bible less often than daily but at least once a week, but this figure should be viewed with caution, because it may well include those boys and girls who read the Bible during the course of church or synagogue services.

The figure of 12% of teens who read the Bible daily compares with about half (52%) of youngsters who read a newspaper every day.

The poll shows the "Bible Belt" remains very much a part of U.S. geography. Teens from the South read the Bible substantially more often than do their counterparts in other regions of the nation. Eastern teens are the least frequent readers, with only 7% claiming to read daily, and fully 40% saying they never open the Bible.

The poll finds that Protestants read the Bible with greater frequency than do Catholics. While 24% of the Protestant teens say they never read the Bible, 37% of the teen Catholics say the same.

While boys and girls read the Bible with just about the same frequency, younger teens of both sexes (13- to 15-year-olds) are far more frequent Bible readers than are their older (16- to 18-year-old) siblings. And in another interesting survey result, black teenagers are found to read the Bible with significantly greater frequency than are whites.

Teenagers whose academic standing is above average are found to read the Bible more frequently than their average or below average counterparts. However, the occupational background of teens' parents is not found to play an important role in the frequency of Bible readership.

Teens who attend church weekly are found to be far more likely than non-regular churchgoers to read the Bible, although one in six infrequent churchgoers nonetheless reads the Bible at least once a week. And even among these non-regular churchgoers, more than half (57%) read the Bible at least once in a while.

Here are the findings:

FREQUENCY OF BIBLE READING

	Daily	At least weekly	At least monthly	Less than monthly	Never not sure
	%	%	%	%	%
NATIONAL	12	24	13	21	30
SEX					
Boys	13	26	12	20	29
Girls	12	23	13	22	30
BOTH SEXES					
13 to 15 years old	14	28	13	18	27
16 to 18 years old	11	20	12	24	33
RACE					
Whites	12	23	12	22	31
Blacks	14	29	16	19	22
ACADEMIC STANDING					
Above average	13	27	11	21	28
Average or below	11	22	14	22	31
RELIGION					
Protestants	16	30	12	18	24
Catholics	6	19	13	25	37
PARENTS' EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND					
White-collar	12	25	11	19	33
Blue-collar	16	22	13	24	25
PARENTS' EDUCATION					
Some college or beyond	13	27	10	20	30
No college	13	22	13	21	31
REGION					
East	7	18	13	22	40
Midwest	12	22	14	22	30
South	17	31	12	20	20
West	15	24	9	22	31
CHURCH ATTENDANCE					
Regular attenders	20	36	14	14	16
Non-regular attenders	5	12	12	28	43

Religion And Society

Large majorities of America's teenagers credit their churches with giving satisfactory answers to the moral problems and needs of the individual, the problems of family life and man's spiritual needs.

Teenagers are found to be somewhat more likely than adults to give their churches high marks in each of the three areas covered in the latest Gallup Youth Survey. And they are *far* more likely to give their churches good marks than are the nation's opinion leaders. The survey of opinion leaders is based on a random sample of persons listed in *Marquis's* WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA and represents the sciences, business, the arts and many other fields.

Following is the question asked and the national findings:

"Generally speaking, do you think your church is giving adequate answers to: (a) the moral problems and needs of the individual; (b) the problems of family life; and (c) man's spiritual needs?"

IS CHURCH GIVING ADEQUATE ANSWERS TO...

...the moral problems and needs of the individual?

	Teens %	Adults %	Leaders %
Yes	64	61	36
No	26	26	48
No opinion	10	13	16
	100	100	100

...the problems of family life?

	Teens %	Adults %	Leaders %
Yes	68	63	24
No	22	24	53
No opinion	10	13	23
	100	100	100

...man's spiritual needs?

	Teens %	Adults %	Leaders %
Yes	80	73	35
No	11	14	41
No opinion	9	13	24
	100	100	100

Teen Values

The nation's teenagers strongly endorse such fundamental values as respect for authority, emphasis on traditional family ties, and plain hard work.

They approve emphasis on self-expression and technological improvement, endorsed decreased emphasis on money, and reject more acceptance of marijuana use, all by a wide margin.

Indeed, the only near-even split comes with a question about the possibility of more acceptance of sexual freedom. Forty-eight percent of the teens say they favor such acceptance, while 44% reject such a trend.

The largest single concensus comes on the question of more respect for authority, which is welcomed by fully 87% of the teens, and rejected by only 9% (4% of the teens are unsure of their feelings on the question).

The questions on authority, family, self-expression and technological advancements get heavy backing from all groups of teenagers, to pretty much the same degree, regardless of sex, age, race or their parents' occupational or educational background.

The poll finds that teenagers who have tried marijuana, who smoke cigarettes, or who drink alcoholic beverages -- predominantly older teens of both sexes -- are considerably more likely to reject traditional social values in general than are their teen counterparts who don't use these substances.

The findings:

SOCIAL CHANGES WHICH MIGHT OCCUR

	Would welcome %	Woudn't welcome %	Not sure %
MORE respect for authority	87	9	4
MORE emphasis on self-expression	82	11	7
MORE emphasis on traditional family ties	80	16	4
MORE emphasis on technological improvements	78	15	7
LESS emphasis on money	63	31	6
MORE acceptance of sexual freedom	48	44	8
LESS emphasis on working hard	28	69	3
MORE acceptance of marijuana usage	24	72	4

Religious Knowledge

Teenagers today overwhelmingly (79%) believe that the Ten Commandments are still valid rules for living today, but they have a tough time recalling exactly what those rules are.

Only 35% of teens can name five or more of the Commandments and only three in 100 can name all 10.

The most easily remembered Commandment, the one that prohibits stealing, was named by 68% of the teens. More teens knew of the Commandment against adultery than the one banning murder.

Only the above three commandments were named by more than half of the teens polled. From there, ability to recall the rules dropped sharply, ending with the Commandment prohibiting the worship of idols, which was named by only 10%.

What Does Easter Mean?

Only three teens in 10 are correctly able to answer three simple and basic questions, drawn from the New Testament that are keystones of the Judeo-Christian heritage. Even among teens who attend church or temple regularly (about half of those polled) only 43% answer all three questions correctly. Conversely, one teenager in five, 19%, is unable to come up with the right answer to any of the three quiz questions.

Central to the Christian religion is the significance of Easter, The Resurrection (or rising from

the dead) of Jesus Christ. Teens participating in the survey did best on this question, with 71% able to describe what Easter means. However, the fact that 29% of all teenagers -- and 20% of those who attend religious services regularly -- don't know why Easter is celebrated will be shocking to religious leaders.

The survey also showed that only one-third of all teens, and only half of church attenders, are able to name the four Gospels of the New Testament. Teens do better on the number of Christ's apostles (12), with two out of three answering correctly. But two out of 10 regular churchgoers drew a blank.

Some groups within the total teen population were more knowledgeable than others about the Bible. These include girls, older teens of both sexes, teens living in the South, those who do better than average work in their school studies, teens whose parents attended college, and those who attended religious services on a regular basis. Catholics and Protestants scored about equally well on the test.

The current quiz results represent further evidence of the low state of biblical knowledge among the youth of this country.

Only One-Third Receiving Training

The results reported today clearly indicate that the homes and churches of America face a major task in increasing the level of knowledge about religion among teenagers, but they also reflect the fact that only one-third of America's teenagers are currently receiving religious training. In fact, in only one part of the country -- the South -- are more than 50% of teens now getting some form of religious education.

The kind of religious training cited most often - by well over half of the teenagers who are currently receiving such training -- is Sunday School (named primarily by Protestants) and religious or parochial school (named mostly by Catholics).

Smaller groups of teens included at-home religious training and school courses in religion as part of their current spiritual education.

The following table shows the proportions who are receiving religious training:

RECEIVING RELIGIOUS TRAINING?

	National
Total receiving:	39%
Kind of training:	
Sunday school	25
Parochial school	8
At home	8
School courses	5
At church	3
Other	4

The stronger influence on the average teen's religious and moral upbringing comes, by a very wide margin, from the mother.

Nationally, fully 59% said their mother had exerted the strongest religious and moral influence, while only 16% named their father and 20% gave both parents equal credit.

Prayer In Schools?

American teens are fairly evenly divided on whether there should be prayer in schools.

The question and results:

"Do you favor or oppose prayer in the schools?"

SCHOOL PRAYERS

	Favor %	Oppose %	No opinion %
National	45	43	12
Boys	45	43	12
Girls	46	42	12
Whites	44	44	12
Blacks	58	31	11
White-collar background	37	49	14
Blue-collar background	51	38	11
Protestants	46	39	15
Catholics	47	43	10
East	33	53	14
Midwest	39	47	14
South	67	26	7
West	36	50	14
Regular churchgoers	58	32	10
Irregular or non-attenders	33	53	14
Attend public schools	42	45	13
Attend private schools	62	30	8
Attend parochial schools	81	17	2

Regular Times Set Aside For Prayer?

Nationally, 13% of teens say their school currently has a regular time set aside for prayer.

Of this group, 83% favored school prayer, while in contrast, only 39% of teens who attend schools which do not now have prayer were in favor.

Finally, 42% of teens attending the public schools, 62% of private school students and 81% of parochial schoolers said they favored school prayers.

BIGGEST PROBLEM FACING TEENAGERS

	1983 %	1977 %
Drug abuse	35	27
Unemployment	16	6
Alcohol abuse	10	7
Peer pressures	8	5
Getting along with parents	5	20
School problems	5	3
Fear of war	4	*
Career doubts and uncertainty	3	3
Economic problems	2	3
Financing college	1	*
Problems in growing up/ Finding purpose in life	1	6
School drop-outs	1	*
Miscellaneous	4	12
Don't know	18	14
	113%**	106%**

* *Less than 1%.*
** *Totals add to more than 100% due to multiple responses.*

IV.
10 WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR CHURCH

Following are 10 suggested ways to help clergy reach as many people as possible as deeply as possible and to move parishioners from the level of religious interest to religious involvement and finally to spiritual commitment.

While the task is a difficult one, it is perhaps somewhat eased by the fact that most Americans are "believers," would like their own faith to grow, want their children to have religious training and think religion should play a greater role in society. Most of the unchurched in our society have had a traditionally religious background and half see a situation that would bring them back into the community of active worshippers. And finally, Americans generally place a high degree of confidence in their clergy.

Results of a study by Compton Advertising, Inc., which drew in part on Gallup research on *The Unchurched American*, point to four basic groups as being "open to renewed involvement":

1. *Family oriented people who want their children to have a religious background and moral training.* No fewer than nine in 10 in a Gallup survey say they would like their children to have religious training.

2. *Those who want to fulfill inner religious needs.* This is a compelling need among Americans -- as indicated, most Americans show an interest in growing in their religious faith and would like religion to play a more important role in society in the coming years.

3. *Those who seek the fellowship or social life offered by church and synagogue.* Many Americans feel lonely and remote from one another. As many as four in 10, for example, admit to frequent or occasional feelings of intense loneliness.

4. *Those who are genuinely interested in attending worship services but who have not been able to find a house of worship that meets their needs.* The message here is clear: churches need to step up their programs of invitation and evangelization.

1. COLLECT BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHURCH

Before a church can plan for its future, and operate on the basis of facts, not assumptions, it should seek answers to certain basic questions:

1. What are the current levels of religious beliefs, practice, knowledge, spiritual commitment, and stewardship among the people of the church?
2. To what extent do people of the church put their faith into action?
3. What are the spiritual and physical needs of the people the church is supposed to serve?
4. What is bringing people to your church -- what is keeping them away?

Carefully-designed surveys can help answer these basic questions and aid churches in their effort to maintain a healthy balance of evangelism, social concern, and spiritual renewal.

While a church should not be controlled by public opinion -- the role of the clergy is certainly to *lead* not *follow* public opinion -- answers to the preceding questions are vital if a church is to be effective in its mission.

Much practical information on church growth has been gathered by a number of denominations and religious organizations in recent years, with most of this information readily available. It would be wise for clergy to be privy to this information.

If you are interested in the possibilities of conducting a survey of your congregation and/or local community and would like expert help and advice, we suggest you contact Russell D. Bredholt, Continental Research Associates, 1153 Winged Foot Circle, Winter Springs, Florida 32708. Telephone: (305) 365-4321. Continental Research Associates is affiliated with the Princeton Religion Research Center.

Continental Research Associates is prepared to help you with the *internal* use of surveys (ranging from pastor and staff assessment to determining the level of spiritual commitment of a congregation) and with *external* surveys (starting new churches, and for evangelism and outreach).

The results of local surveys can be compared with regional and national norms based upon nationwide surveys. The following information, based on Gallup surveys may be helpful in this respect:

* WAYS CHURCHES CAN BETTER SERVE: (In a 1983 survey conducted by the Gallup Organization for the Robert Schuller Ministries survey respondents were handed a card with 8 items and asked: "in which of these ways, if any, would you like to see churches better serve you?")

Help you put your faith into practice	37%
Enable you to deepen your relationship with Jesus Christ	35
Shed light on issues such as the problems of suffering, death, and dying	33
Help people to be more effective parents	32
Enable you to serve others better	31
Develop greater use of your gifts or talents	21
Help you in your prayer life	19
Through counseling with prayer	16
Other responses	1
None	8
Don't know	14
	247%*

*Total adds to more than 100% due to multiple responses.

* WAYS PEOPLE STRENGTHEN THEIR FAITH. (The same survey in which survey participants were handed a card with 17 items and asked: "What sort of things, if any, do you do to nourish or strength your faith?")

Pray alone	59%
Help others	51
Attend religious services	44
Read the Bible	39
Listen to sermons or lectures	36
Meditation	32
Take walks, commune with nature	31
Receive Holy Communion	29
Watch religious TV programs	21
Read religious books other than Bible	21
Prayer in a group	19
Seek out fellow Christians	17
Pray with others for spiritual healing	14

Read religious magazines	13
Read Bible in a group	12
Evangelize, encourage others to accept Jesus	11
Spiritual counseling	8
None of the above	6
Don't know/no answer	3

* STUMBLING BLOCKS TO FAITH. (In a 1982 survey conducted for the *Christian Broadcasting Network* by the Gallup Organization, survey respondents were asked what three questions (from a list of 11) they would ask God if given the opportunity.

* Will there ever be a lasting world peace?
* How can I be a better person?
* What does the future hold for me and my family?
* Will there ever be a cure for all diseases?
* Why is there suffering in the world?
* Is there life after death?
* What is Heaven like?
* Will man ever love his fellow man?
* Why is there evil in the world?
* When will the world end?
* Why was man created?

* FACTORS THAT HAVE CAUSED THE UNCHURCHED TO BECOME CHURCHED. (From a 1978 survey conducted on the "unchurched American" for 31 religious groups and denominations, convened by the National Council of Churches in Christ and conducted by the Gallup Organization.)

1. Organized religion is widely criticized by the unchurched as having lost "the real spiritual part of religion" and for being "too concerned with organizational as opposed to theological or spiritual issues."

2. Many feel that most churches are not effective in helping people find meaning in life.

3. Others say that churches are not concerned enough with social justice.

4. And still others say that churches are not warm and accepting of outsiders.

It is of great importance to note that these criticisms are shared by large proportions of the *churched* as well as the *unchurched*.

2. RE-EXAMINE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The alarm has been sounded by the *National Commission on Excellence in Education* for upgrading the quality of *secular* education in the U.S. The time is now overdue for sounding the alarm in terms of *religious* education which must undergird our lives and will give our efforts and pursuits the creative energy and divine dimension they require.

Unless Americans are clear about what they believe and why, our religious convictions and commitment will be weak. Yet we are seeing in our nation today a rising generation -- idealistic and searching for the meaning of life -- but without spiritual direction and without a knowledge of the very basics of their faith.

Biblical illiteracy is found among all age groups. Eight in 10 Americans, for example, consider themselves Christians, but only half this proportion, four in 10, know who, according to the Bible, delivered the Sermon on the Mount.

There are many other examples of our lack of Biblical knowledge, and for the churched as well as the unchurched.

The low level of Biblical knowledge is only partly the fault of the education program of churches in this country. A key reason is the fact that only one-third of teenagers are currently receiving religious training of any sort, whether in church, school or home.

Our churches, homes, and religious institutions are failing in another respect: they have not created the desire to continue one's religious education in adult years. Religious training of many comes to an abrupt halt in childhood or early teens.

One suggestion that may have merit is to develop a nationwide standardized test on basic religious facts against which a church could measure its own religious education program.

3. MAKE GREATER, MORE CREATIVE USE OF TELEVISION

Given the fact that the average American spends 6 hours per day in front of the television screen, television clearly has the potential of being a major force in our spiritual lives.

Because the electronic media will greatly shape our religious lives in the years ahead, we should make every effort to see that programs are developed which will meet the needs and tests and foster the spiritual growth of the broad spectrum of the U.S. population. Greater emphasis, for example, could be placed on hard theological discussion, the need to direct personal renewal into social renewal, the importance of sacramental life and the need to belong to a worshipping community.

It should be recognized that, because of the nature of television, it is extremely difficult to build and keep an audience. It requires experts, and so a major focus in seminaries should be on communications and television skills.

The "electronic church," sometimes viewed as the enemy of organized religion and of the local parish -- should be considered an ally, for television may be the best way to overcome certain worrisome trends in our society, such as a decline in religous knowledge. Efforts should be made to determine ways religious television and local churches can complement each other in their goal of deepening the level of spiritual commitment among the populace.

Some observers have noted that the absence of the church's presence from television and radio has weakened the influence of the church in our society. By way of background, it should be noted that television is regarded by many Americans as having a negative effect on the family, particularly in terms of what is perceived to be an "overemphasis on sex" and an "overemphasis on violence."

Although many major religious denominations have not kept pace with the electronic revolution, this situation is beginning to change and certain denominations are now beginning to show new interest in telecommunications technology.

One organization which was early aware of the importance of the impact of radio and television on our religious lives is the National Radio-TV Foundation which has been producing religious spots and drama "specials" for radio (and later for TV) for more than three decades.

What kinds of programs should be developed for television and radio in the future? Movies and plays with a religious message may be the best way to reach people. A study in Great Britain conducted by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, revealed that young people were more deeply reached by the television series, *Jesus of Nazareth*, than by any sermons they had heard or any Bible passages they had read.

It would also seem important for denominations with relatively little current exposure on TV to groom compelling television and radio personalities.

Increasingly, TV and radio are entering the life of many parishes across the nation, in these ways: (1) local talk shows; (2) brief devotionals; (3) broadcasts of services; (4) reporting of activities; (5) special services; and (7) broadcasting of religious music.

4. IMPROVE THE SUPPORT SYSTEM WITHIN YOUR CHURCH

Studies have indicated that churches should develop a greater system among the lay members of a given church so that the clergy can be free to spend more time in pastoral counseling. When unchurched persons in the study, *The Unchurched American*, were asked what would bring them back to the church, one of the key answers given was "if I can find a minister (priest/rabbi) with whom I can discuss my religious doubts and needs."

There would appear to be a great need for spiritual counseling at this moment in the nation's history, given the widespread concern over the threat of nuclear war and feelings of loneliness and estrangement among large segments of the population. Indeed, one could argue that every individual in the nation needs a spiritual counsellor or a faith partner of some sort -- a person with whom one can share his or her innermost spiritual feelings -- a member of the clergy, a friend, a husband or wife, a parent, or a child.

Because of the need for a spiritual counsellor or faith partner, the movement toward small fellowship groups in the nation is certainly an encouraging one. In view of the relatively low level of spiritual commitment among Americans today, it would certainly seem that few of us can "go it alone" in our spiritual journeys. "Faith grows best in the presence of faith."

5. BE ALERT TO KEY FACTORS IN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Some intriguing findings have emerged from a preliminary study conducted on the dimensions and dynamics of faith as a part of a larger study undertaken for Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle (a research project of the United States and Canada in cooperation with the Center for Religious Education, College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota).

Among the key findings are those that show that major life events, such as having children, illnesses, and experiencing the death of loved ones, appear to have a decided impact on faith: virtually everyone in this small-scale pilot survey had experiended some of these major events, and those who had were likely to say the experience had deeply influenced their thoughts about the meaning and purpose of life. And very importantly, many did not seem to be finding support for their faith or help during life crises from their religious organizations: when dealing with personal challenges, far more people turn to private activities such as prayer, music and in spiritual reading than to their religious community; even fewer seek help from religious professionals.

These findings underline the importance of the clergy's reaching out to people at moments of crisis, not only because they are in dire need of prayerful support, but because these crises are often the most important moment in the faith life of humans when their faith either is suddenly strengthened or begins to fall away.

It should also be noted that in Gallup surveys over the last two decades, one-third of the population reports a life-changing religious experience. Yet many of these people are "spiritually charged up but have no place to go." It is important for the clergy to help these people understand their experience and to build upon it.

The study referred to earlier will also explore the relationship between faith development and the age cycle.

6. ENCOURAGE NEW VOCATIONS

Still greater efforts should be made by churches to match church and community needs with the time and the talents of parishioners. In fact, a whole new set of religious vocations, for older persons as well as youth, could be developed. Such vocations could include a Help-Line telephone ministry; collecting and distributing food; organizing a transportation system for the elderly or handicapped; helping children learn how to read; and working with those who drop out of school. The list could, of course, be greatly expanded.

The desire on the part of youth for models for service is not limited to American youth. Young people in France told Pope John Paul II that they wanted to serve the church but didn't have models to adopt and follow. It clearly behooves all churches to develop new and creative outlets for Christian youth, here and abroad, who are spiritually "all charged up" but have no place to go.

The will to believe among young people, and their new interest in religion should be linked with their desire to serve society. Evidence that young people have a strong social conscience is seen in their occupation choices, which are heavily weighted toward the "helping professions" -- teaching, social work, medicine and the like, and in their willingness to give one year of service to the nation, either in military or non-military work. Most likely to favor such a plan are teenagers who describe themselves as "very religious."

Study should be given various new forms of ministry, both formal and informal. We have para-lawyers, and para-medics -- perhaps it would be possible to develop para-clerics, with persons given a certain amount of formal training enabling them to become more involved in the basic functions of a church.

7. ENCOURAGE BIBLE READING

While the Bible is prominent in the lives of Americans -- it is the first authority for many and most believe it to be either the actual or inspired word of God -- few actually turn to the Bible and many know little of the Bible.

The low level of readership (only one in seven reads the Bible daily and one-fourth never

read it) is reflected in the sorry state of Biblical knowledge in this country.

For many the Bible remains inaccessible. And even among regular readers of the Bible, much of the reading could be considered desultory. Dr Frank Thompson, a Methodist minister had this to say (as quoted by Michael J. McManus in his column, *Ethics & Religion*):

"Haphazard reading of a few verses of the Scriptures every day is better than nothing, but is not really Bible study. It is simply nibbling at the truth and does not tend to build up strong Christians." He suggests that the reader "adopt some systematic method" of studying the Bible.

How can the Bible be brought into the daily lives of Americans? Here is what the Rev. H. Lawrence Scott, Rector of St. Phillip's Church in Charleston, S.C. had to say on the subject:

> We all know the power of a habit. Most of us try to break our bad habits and are failing miserably. The key is to develop holy habits instead of unholy ones. It takes 30 days to form a habit. What's needed is to put into life a Biblical practice for 30 days. If you do that, you have developed the initial phase of a holy habit -- 30 days to change your life.

Columnist McManus urged his readers to start "Neighborhood Bible Study." He stresses the importance of group study and quotes Marilyn Kunz who has organized Bible studies in the *Intervarsity Christian Fellowship* and believes that the same studies could be adapted for use by church members in evangelizing their own neighborhoods.

Marilyn Kunz's view is that every person who gains things from the Scripture is under obligation to share with others. She quotes a missionary who once said, "If I teach you, you are under obligation to share with others." The best way for a person to influence another person, notes Kunz, is to get that person to think for himself or herself. "Very few people are interested in sitting at the feet of experts," she says, noting that "people remember only 10% of what they read, 20% of what tney hear, but up to 70% of what they say, and 90% of what they say *and* do."

8. STRESS RESPONSIBLE EVANGELIZATION

The loss of church members in certain denominations over the last two decades can be traced in considerable measure to a lack of effort in the area of evangelization. Certainly one of the key signs of an active and vital church is a highly-developed program of evangelization and invitation.

Columnist McManus suggests that each church member ask himself: "How well is your church communicating its interest and concern for those who are not yet a member?"

Church leaders need not only to encourage Christians to share their spiritual experiences with others, but to witness their faith by living out the love of Christ in their lives.

The evangelistic approach should be helpful and non-threatening; persons who evangelize should be well-trained and be good *listeners*. Evangelization can also be understood in terms of a counseling relationship with those who wish to mature in Christ.

Those involved in evangelization should point out that church involvement can help in these ways:

* *In dealing with the problems of life.* Surveys have frequently shown that the religiously-involved are often more able to cope with life's many problems than are those who are not religiously-involved.

* *By strengthening the religious and moral development of their children.* Most parents put a high premium on the religious development of their children.

* *In helping people understand the meaning of life.* Many people today appear to be searching with a new intensity for a deeper dimension to their lives.

* *In enriching one's spiritual life.* Many of the unchurched have active spiritual lives and pray regularly. Those involved in evangelization could point out how this prayer life could be nourished in a church context, through prayer meetings, discussion groups and the like.

Many religious leaders have called for evangelization on an interdenominational basis. The Rev. Alvin A. Illig, C.S.P. writes in the September 1982 issue of *The Priest*:

Under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, the chemistry of ecumenism is preparing the Christian Community for collaboration in evangelization, turning distrust into trust, suspicion into respect, competition into cooperation.

Evangelization (i.e., bringing the Good News into every area of life) and Ecumenism (i.e., the effort to undo the scandal of disunity among believing Christian people) are growing together in America because there is contradiction between the two. *Both compel us to look to one another, to learn from one another, to celebrate what we have in common, to appreciate the special emphasis each one of us brings to evangelization, and to recognize the unique features found in each others' evangelization programs.*

Sometimes the only thing needed to get an unchurched person to come to a house of worship is a simple invitation, as seen in the results of the following study on the reasons persons join a church:

-- Three to eight percent walk in of their own initiative;

-- Four to 10 percent come because of the activities;

-- Ten to 20 percent because of the minister;

-- A like percentage because of an evangelistic program;

-- Three to six percent because of the Sunday School;

-- And 60 to 90 percent because their friends or relatives invited them to church.

9. ENCOURAGE THE FORMATION OF SMALL FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

Joseph Davis, assistant editor of *Pastoral Renewal*, writes in the December issue:

A growing body of evidence suggests that one general risk factor that all of us share to some degree is the weakening of ties between people in contemporary society. The stress of the breakdown in people's relationships seems to be taking its toll on people's health. At the same time, people who are connected to strong networks of family and groups seem largely to escape some of the common physical ills of modern America.

The threat of a breakdown in people's relationships has important spiritual implications, since the case can certainly be made that a healthy spiritual life depends not only upon a blend of private and public worship but worship in small fellowship groups as well.

Some observors of the American religious scene are encouraged by what appears to be a growth in these small groups which are involved in prayer and Bible study. Edgar Jackson in Understanding Prayer said: "Whenever the church in history has been spiritually vigorous there has been small-group prayer activity taking place."

Columnist Michael J. McManus makes this important observation:

> The one difference I see between churchgoers and those with deep spiritual faith is that the latter meet frequently in small groups with others in fellowship, prayer and mutual support. In this setting, people can see the power of prayer and make the exciting discovery that God really cares about them personally.

10. ENCOURAGE AN OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK AMONG CHURCH MEMBERS

The many problems facing the nation and the world understandably have caused some clergy to take a pessimistic view of the future and this outlook sometimes affects an entire congregation.

While it is obviously foolish to gloss over the severe problems that confront our society, it is also important that our religious leaders constantly present the Christian message of hope, and at the same time point out that there is much that an individual can do to bring about change in his or her community. Indeed, no one is denied this opportunity.

Americans are known for their voluntarism, much of which is motivated by religious convictions. It is important that each person be made to feel that he or she can make a difference and that the future is in the hands of those who seek to follow God's plan for their lives.

Perhaps we should follow the lead of the one person in 10 in our society who can be considered "highly spiritually committed." These persons, although tending to be downscale economically, have been able to rise above their circumstances, and are far happier than the rest of society while being far more involved in direct person-to-person "practical religion."

With many Americans brooding over the future of mankind and wondering what they as individuals can possibly do to brighten the outlook, it would appear to be of great importance at this moment in history that they receive a message of hope from their religious leaders.

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

METHODOLOGY

DESIGN OF THE SAMPLE

The design of the sample used by the Gallup Poll for its standard surveys of public opinion is that of a replicated probability sample down to the block level in the case of urban areas and to segments of townships in the case of rural areas.

After stratifying the nation geographically and by size of community in order to insure conformity of the sample with the latest available estimates by the Census Bureau of the distribution of the adult population, over 350 different sampling locations or areas (Census Tracts or Census Enumeration Districts) are selected on a mathematically random basis from within cities, towns, and counties which have in turn been selected on a mathmatically random basis. The interviewers have no choice whatsoever concerning the part of the city, town, or county in which they conduct their interviews.

Approximately five interviews are conducted in each such randomly selected sampling point. Interviewers are given maps of the area to which they are assigned, with a starting point indicated; they are required to follow a specified direction. At each occupied dwelling unit, interviewers are instructed to select respondents by following a prescribed systematic method and by a male-female assignment. This procedure is followed until the assigned number of interviews has been completed.

Since this sampling procedure is designed to produce a sample which approximates the adult civilian population (18 and older) living in private households in the United States (that is, excluding those in prisons and hospitals, hotels, religious and educational institutions and on military reservations), the survey results can be applied to this population for the purpose of projecting percentages into number of people. The manner in which the sample is drawn also produces a sample which approximates the population of private households in the United States. Therefore, survey results can also be projected in terms of number of households when appropriate.

SAMPLING ERROR

In interpreting survey results, it should be remembered that all sample surveys are subject to sampling error, that is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the whole population surveyed had been interviewed. The size of such sampling errors depends largely on the number of interviews.

The tables on the following page may be used in estimating sampling error. The computed allowances have taken into account the effect of the sample design upon sampling error. They may be interpreted as indicating the range (plus or minus the figure shown) within which the results of repeated samplings in the same time period could be expected to vary, 95 percent of the time, assuming the same sampling procedure, the same interviewers, and the same questionnaire.

Table A shows how much allowance should be made for the sampling error of a percentage.

The table would be used in the following manner: Say a reported percentage is 33 for a group which includes 1500 respondents. Go to row "percentages near 30" in the table and then to the column headed "1500". The number at this point is three, which means that the 33 percent obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus three points. Another way of saying it is that very probably (95 chances out of 100) the average of repeated samplings would be somewhere between 30 and 36, with the most likely figure the 33 obtained.

In comparing survey results in two sub-samples, such as men and women the question arises as to how large must a difference between them be before one can be reasonably sure that it reflects a real difference. In tables B and C, the number of points which must be allowed for in such comparisons is indicated.

For percentages near 20 or 80, use Table B, for those near 50, Table C. For percentages in between, the error to be allowed for is between that shown in the two tables.

Here is an example of how the tables should be used: Say 50 percent of men and 40 percent of women respond the same way to a question; a difference of 10 percentage points. Can it be said with any assurance the 10 point difference reflects a real difference between men and women on the question? (Samples, unless otherwise noted, contain approximately 750 men and 750 women.)

Because the percentages are near 50, consult Table C. Since the two samples are about 750 persons each, look for the place in the table where the column and row labeled "750" converge. The number six appears there. This means the allowance for error should be six points, and the conclusion that the percentage among men is somewhere between four and 16 points higher than the percentage among women would be wrong only about five percent of the time. In other words, there is a considerable likelihood that a difference exists in the direction observed and that it amounts to at least four percentage points.

If, in another case, male respondents amount to 22 percent, and female to 24 percent, consult Table B because these percentages are near 20. The column and row labled "750" converge on the number five. Obviously then, the two point difference is inconclusive.

TABLE A

Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of a Percentage

In Percentage Points
(at 95 in 100 confidence level)*

	Size of Sample						
	1500	1000	750	600	400	200	100
Percentages near 10	2	2	3	4	4	5	7
Percentages near 20	2	3	4	4	5	7	9
Percentages near 30	3	4	4	5	6	8	10
Percentages near 40	3	4	4	5	6	9	11
Percentages near 50	3	4	4	5	6	9	11
Percentages near 60	3	4	4	5	6	9	11
Percentages near 70	3	4	4	5	6	8	10
Percentages near 80	2	3	4	4	5	7	9
Percentages near 90	2	2	3	4	4	5	7

TABLE B

Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of the Difference

In Percentage Points
(at 95 in 100 confidence level)*

	Percentages near 20 or percentages near 80			
	750	600	400	200
Size of the Sample				
750	5			
600	6	6		
400	7	7	7	
200	8	8	9	10

TABLE C

	Percentages near 50			
Size of the Sample				
750	6			
600	8	8		
400	8	8	9	
200	10	11	11	13

* The chances are 95 in 100 that the sampling error is not larger than the figures shown.

SIZE OF THE SAMPLE *

The following table provides the approximate number of persons interviewed in each group for any single survey. These sample sizes apply to all surveys unless otherwise noted.

NATIONAL	1500
SEX	
Men	750
Women	750
RACE	
Whites	1305
Non-whites	195
Blacks	165
EDUCATION	
College graduate	300
College incomplete	340
High school graduate	510
Less than H.S. grad.	350
AGE	
Total under 30	360
18 - 24 years	195
25 - 29 years	165
30 - 49 years	535
Total 50 & older	605
50 - 64 years	330
65 & older	275
REGION	
East	405
Midwest	415
South	410
West	270
POLITICS	
Republicans	405
Democrats	650
Independents	445
HOUSEHOLD INCOME	
$15,000 & over	585
Under $15,000	915
RELIGION	
Protestants	850
Catholics	420
Jews	40
DENOMINATIONS	
Southern Baptists	140
Lutherans	90
Methodists	150
Presbyterians	60
Episcopalians	35
MARITAL STATUS	
Married	1000
Single	275
Widowed	130
Currently divorced/ separated	95
URBANIZATION	
Center cities	481
Suburbs	442
Rural	577

* Rounded to nearest five.

NOTE

1. Findings for *importance of religion in own life* are based on four national surveys. Multiply appropriate sample sizes by four.

2. Findings for *church membership and church attendance* are based on five national surveys. Multiply appropriate sample sizes by five.

3. Findings for *faith and denominational preferences* are based on 20 national surveys. Multiply appropriate sample sizes by 20.

RECORD OF GALLUP POLL ACCURACY

Year	Gallup Final Survey*		Election Result*		Deviation
1982	55.0%	Democratic	56.1%	Democratic	– 1.1
1980	47.0	Reagan	50.8	Reagan	– 3.8
1978	55.0	Democratic	54.6	Democratic	+ 0.4
1976	48.0	Carter	50.0	Carter	– 2.0
1974	60.0	Democratic	58.9	Democratic	+ 1.1
1972	62.0	Nixon	61.8	Nixon	+ 0.2
1970	53.0	Democratic	54.3	Democratic	– 1.3
1968	43.0	Nixon	43.5	Nixon	– 0.5
1966	52.5	Democratic	51.9	Democratic	+ 0.6
1964	64.0	Johnson	61.3	Johnson	+ 2.7
1962	55.5	Democratic	52.7	Democratic	+ 2.8
1960	51.0	Kennedy	50.1	Kennedy	+ 0.9
1958	57.0	Democratic	56.5	Democratic	+ 0.5
1956	59.5	Eisenhower	57.8	Eisenhower	+ 1.7
1954	51.5	Democratic	52.7	Democratic	– 1.2
1952	51.0	Eisenhower	55.4	Eisenhower	– 4.4
1950	51.0	Democratic	50.3	Democratic	+ 0.7
1948	44.5	Truman	49.9	Truman	– 5.4
1946	58.0	Republican	54.3	Republican	+ 3.7
1944	51.5	Roosevelt	53.3[2]	Roosevelt	– 1.8
1942	52.0	Democratic	48.0[1]	Democratic	+ 4.0
1940	52.0	Roosevelt	55.0	Roosevelt	– 3.0
1938	54.0	Democratic	50.8	Democratic	+ 3.2
1936	55.7	Roosevelt	62.5	Roosevelt	– 6.8

Average deviation for 24 national elections.

2.2 percentage points.

Average deviation for 17 national elections since 1950 inclusive.

1.5 percentage points.

TREND IN DEVIATION

Elections	Average Error
1936–1950	3.6
1952–1960	1.7
1962–1970	1.6
1972–1982	1.4

* The figure shown is the winner's percentage of the Democratic–Republican vote except in the elections of 1948, 1968, 1976 and 1980. Because the Thurmond and Henry Wallace voters in 1948 were largely split offs from the normally Democratic vote, final pre election estimates of the division of the vote were made for the four candidates Truman, Dewey, Wallace, and Thurmond. Therefore, the percentages for Truman shown for 1948 are based on the total vote for the four candidates. In 1968 George Wallace's candidacy was supported by such a large minority that he was clearly a major candidate, and the 1968 percentages are based on the total Nixon–Humphrey–Wallace vote. In 1976, because of interest in McCarthy's candidacy and its potential effect on the Carter vote, the final Gallup Poll report included estimates of the share of the vote for Carter, Ford, and McCarthy, as well as an estimate for all other candidates combined. Therefore, the percentages for Carter shown for 1976 are based on the total vote for all candidates. The same is true of 1980 when Anderson's candidacy drew a sizeable minority vote.

1 Final report said Democrats would win control of the house, which they did even though the Republicans won a majority of the popular vote.

2 Civilian vote 53.3, Roosevelt soldier vote 0.5 = 53.8 Roosevelt. Gallup final survey based on civilian vote.

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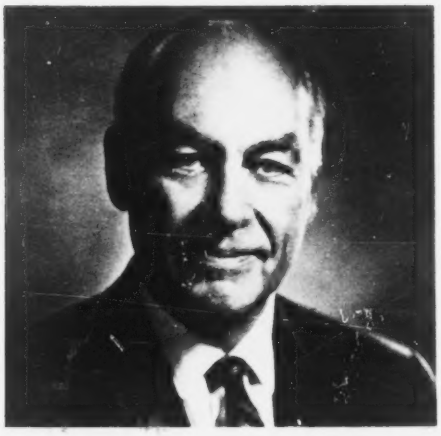

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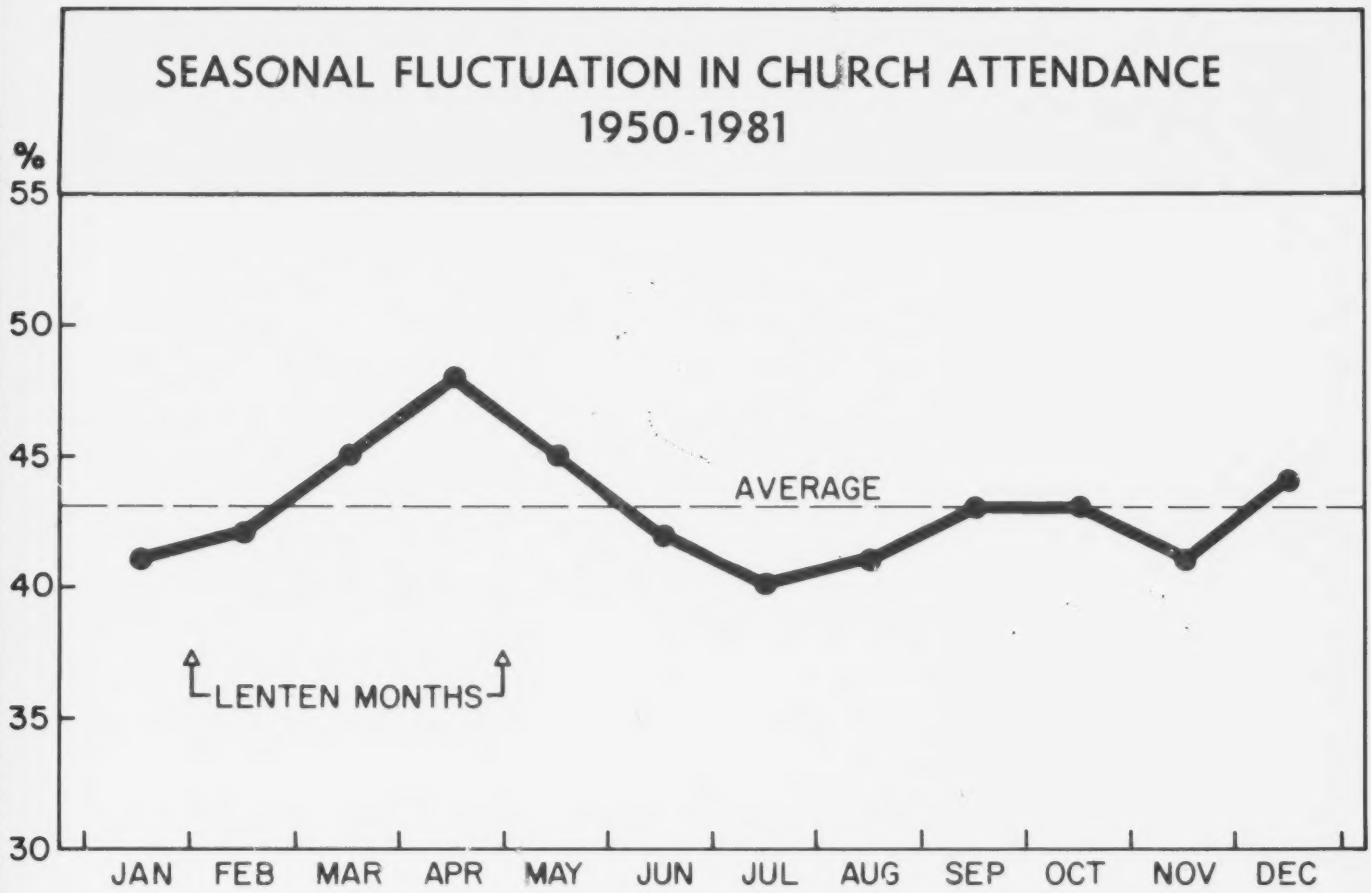

The chart above is based on 150 national Gallup surveys conducted since 1950, and interviews with more than 200,000 adults.

PERCENT SAYING ATTENDED
CHURCH IN LAST 7 DAYS

January	41%
February	42
March	45
April	48
May	45
June	42
July	40
August	41
September	43
October	43
November	41
December	44

AVERAGE: 43